The logo features a large, light blue circle containing a dark blue silhouette of the Buffalo Empire State. The text is overlaid on the silhouette. A vertical orange bar is on the right side of the page.

BUFFALO EMPIRE STATE POVERTY REDUCTION INITIATIVE

Community Outreach and Engagement
Full Report
SUMMER 2017



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September 2017, Buffalo, NY

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The Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative (ESPRI) was launched by New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo as an effort to reduce financial hardship in 16 high poverty communities across the state.

Phase I of the Buffalo ESPRI runs from April 2017 to November 2017 and is focused on assembling a plan for reducing financial hardship in the community. A major portion of this planning phase has been robust community outreach. This outreach effort intentionally and strategically sought the voices of community members who have experienced or are experiencing financial hardship as well as those living in high poverty neighborhoods. By taking a multi-pronged approach, the project team and its consultants sought input on three primary questions:

- 1) What is the current state of the challenges and obstacles that individuals, families and communities face to financial stability?
- 2) What are the underlying causes of the financial hardship faced by community members?
- 3) What changes need to be made in order to alleviate financial hardship within the community?

Through a series of community forums, attendance at community based events, community pop ups including in person and on-line survey collection, more than 900 individuals submitted feedback, totaling roughly 250 hours of time dedicated to providing feedback from the community. This report would not have been possible if not for the generosity of this time and the commitment to improving the city and region on the part of these community members.

What emerged from this feedback was both a complex picture of financial hardship, and a nuanced view of the causes of — and opportunities to address — these interwoven challenges.

**BUFFALO EMPIRE STATE POVERTY REDUCTION INITIATIVE
COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT REPORT**

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Context

More than one third of Buffalo's residents (and one in six of those who live in Erie County) live in poverty, a significant increase in the poverty rate over the last ten years.¹ Despite the city and the region's recent economic resurgence, national trends in the economy and systemic challenges facing those living with financial hardship have prevented widespread benefits from accruing to all of the community's residents.

Those living in poverty in the county and in the city are disproportionately women, children and people of color. People of color comprise 55% of the population in the city of Buffalo (23% in the county), but because of the impacts of segregation and systemic disparities, they represent 75% of people in poverty (54% in the county). And though women comprise 52% of the population of the county and the city, they represent 56% of those living in poverty.

Those living below the official poverty level, however, are not the only residents facing financial hardship. The United Way of Buffalo and Erie County's 2016 Community Report Card on Financial Hardship outlines the challenges that families face in making ends meet, and places the threshold for financial stability (meeting the "household survival budget") for a family of four in Erie County at \$61,548, far above the federal poverty level of \$23,850.

While the outreach component of this initiative was structured to reach community members with experience confronting financial hardship, it was also the goal of this process and this report — by including these voices in the decision making construct — to suggest strategies that are appropriate and applicable to these populations.

in attempting to do so, this report also acknowledges the need to set aside normative assumptions about structures, systems and existing responses to poverty that have, to this point, not had their intended or desired impacts of reducing financial hardship and achieving equity for those disproportionately impacted by these challenges.

Finally, it is also the goal of this input summary to open and expand the dialogue with community members about ongoing struggles and potential solutions to poverty and financial hardship. However, this report is a starting point, not an end point. The implementation phase for ESPRI will continue to benefit — and ultimately only be successful — if it continues to pursue ongoing input and engagement from populations who understand these challenges best.

¹ 33.1% of Buffalo residents live in poverty according to 2015 ACS 1-year estimates, 2005 ACS estimates placed the city's poverty rate at 26.9%. 2015 ACS 1-year estimates placed the county-wide poverty rate at 15.6% and 2005 ACS placed it at 13.1%.

Public Outreach Design and Methodology

Buffalo ESPRI engaged Make Communities and NeuWater & Associates to design and implement a community engagement strategy for Phase I of the project. In addition to gathering community feedback on the three main questions (current state, underlying causes, and changes that need to be made), the methodology began with the assumption that beginning from scratch would be counterproductive.

Many recent and ongoing initiatives in the city and in the region have built a wealth of knowledge about the state of the community, and many of the partners involved in these projects have come to the ESPRI table to integrate this work. Among these efforts are The Racial Equity Roundtable (which produced the *Racial Equity Dividend* report in conjunction with the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, outlining the potential for opportunity and growth by focusing on achieving racial equity), Employ Buffalo Niagara (whose partners including Invest Buffalo Niagara produced the *Buffalo Niagara LMA17* - a comprehensive labor market assessment of the region), and the Mobile Safety Net Team (which produced *Strengthening WNY's Safety Net* — community-by-community reports of many disinvested neighborhoods in the region that highlight the existing resources and challenges these areas contain).²

In addition, this ESPRI project benefits from the United Way's continuing efforts to address financial hardship in the region, including a 2016 Community Report Card on Financial Hardship. Also known as "*the ALICE Report*", this community profile highlights conditions faced by Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed families. These

existing frameworks were a starting point for building a community informed-perspective on challenges, causes and changes for enhancing financial stability through the ESPRI initiative.

NeuWater & Associates took the lead on designing a series of community conversations in a forum setting that focused on core elements quality of life within communities. Each of these core elements were derived from key topics and findings of the ALICE report. These conversations centered around scenarios in housing and financial hardship, child care and transportation, employment and jobs, access to food, health and wellness, and education. The forums were built using trauma informed and human centered design principles.

The community surveys also followed the topic areas and general framework built through the forum design. Make Communities took the lead on survey design and pop-up events, with an on-line and physical distribution strategy that aimed to maximize perspectives of community members who live in disinvested neighborhoods and who are facing financial hardship. Pop Up Placards were a quick and visible way to garner input from and engage directly with festival and community event goers.

Many community based organization contributed to survey distribution and collection. Task Force members distributed surveys on-line and in print to their constituencies while organizations such as Open Buffalo and the Witness Project enhanced community coverage by engaging field data collectors to interface with people in community settings.

² See Appendix A for a summary of these reports.

Next Steps and Continued Engagement

Hundreds of participants in this community engagement process asked to remain informed and engaged as Buffalo's Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative continues and evolves into future phases.

What form this future engagement takes, and how residents can contribute to implementation and ongoing feedback has yet to be determined, but should be a consideration as the Buffalo ESPRI project team continues to develop and refine its plan.

What is clear, however, is that Buffalo has once again proven its mantra as the City of Good Neighbors through an outpouring of generosity by way of its contribution of time, energy, ideas and ideals to these early stages of the ESPRI. This goes for forum attendees and volunteer facilitators, survey takers and survey collectors, agencies who added to their already strained work loads, and many others — all in order to make sure community voices were heard and considered in this process. The process and the outcome will surely be stronger for these efforts.

Ultimately, as a new Buffalo emerges from the old, it is creating uncertainty and new challenges along with opportunity and new possibilities. The ongoing insight and lessons learned through lived experiences of its residents will continue to be a critical component to ensuring this turning point in the City's history is also a turning point for reducing the financial hardships and additional burdens that have been faced by segments of the community for far too long.

Buffalo Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative

Community Outreach and Engagement

Community Survey Summary

Survey Methodology and Results

The Buffalo ESPRI Community Survey was created with the input of the Buffalo ESPRI Steering Committee, staff, and community engagement consultants Make Communities and NeuWater Associates. Though the survey was designed to be comprehensive, it was also designed with the intent of being approachable.

In order to have a broad reach, and also ensure input from those with experience with financial hardship, the survey was available online as well as in paper format at many locations and events throughout the city of Buffalo. It was distributed through email lists, through partner organizations, at community events and at neighborhood pop ups specifically targeted at communities with high levels of financial instability. Surveys were developed in English and translated into Spanish, French, and Arabic and reviewed by community members for linguistic consistency and readability.

In keeping with the goal of reaching communities and individuals experiencing financial hardship, survey respondents represent a cross section of the community, with a significant representation of both people of color and households living with limited financial means.

Survey collection began on June 3, 2017 and continued through July 10, 2017. The survey was released in an online and mobile friendly format which was distributed through partner agencies that are members of the Steering Committee and Task Force and was promoted in local media including on local radio stations. In addition, paper copies of the survey were distributed and collected by organizations including The Salvation Army, Hispanics United of Buffalo, Delavan Grider Community Center, Catholic Charities, True Bethel, Schiller Park Community Center, Gloria J Parks Community Center, and the Millennium Collaborative. The Witness Project and Open Buffalo each deployed field data collectors at various locations throughout the city to engage with residents about the ESPRI and to collect survey responses and assisting or administering the survey verbally to those with literacy challenges.

Community events were significant sources of survey respondents, with 53 surveys collected at the Harvey Austin community forum and carnival, 73 collected at the Mass Ave Park Community Concert, 100 collected at the Juneteenth Festival, and 14 collected at the Lincoln Memorial Baptist Church community forum and street festival.

In all, 720 paper surveys were collected. In addition 180 on-line responses were received for a total of 900 surveys. Not all respondents answered all questions or completed the full survey. In order to respect the time of community members and to cast as broad a net as possible in securing community input, however, to the extent feasible all responses that were collected were entered into the tally and summaries contained in this report.

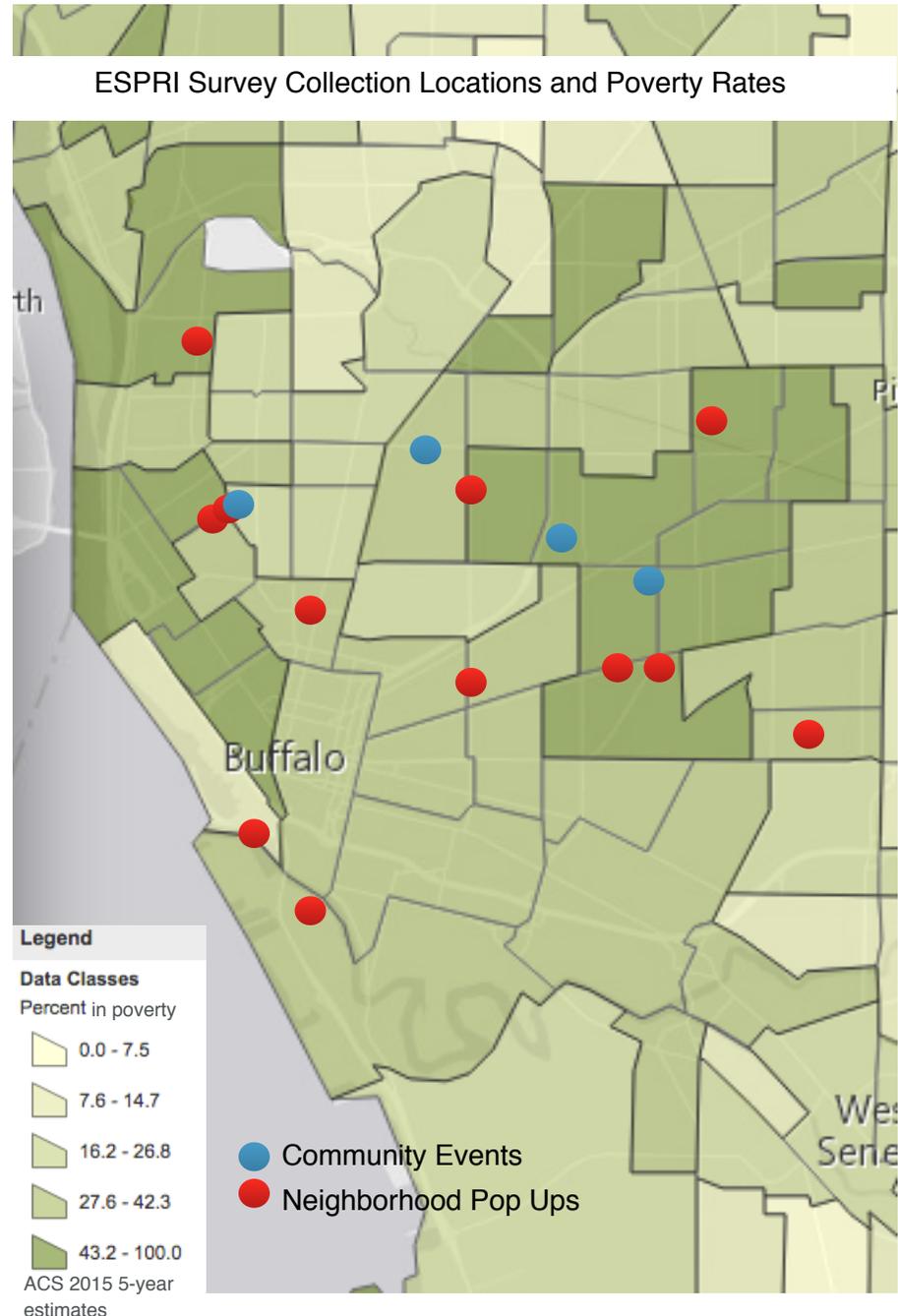
A copy of the paper version of survey is attached to this report as Appendix B.

Survey Collection Locations

Survey collection was designed to maximize participation from communities disproportionately impacted by financial hardship. Statistics from the 2015 Census Bureau American Community Survey were used to measure poverty rates. Neighborhoods where poverty rates were in the top two quintiles (27.5% or higher) for Erie County were selected, and census tracts in the top quintile (43% or higher) were emphasized for outreach.

In addition to prominent community festivals on the east and west sides of the city, community based pop ups were staffed by field data collectors to meet community residents where they were, rather than expecting or obligating community members to go out of their way to volunteer their time for the survey.

These community pop up locations included outreach in Allentown, at the Broadway Market, at Canalside and Riverworks, in the Delavan-Grider neighborhood, on Grant Street, at the Hennepin Community Center, at the Jefferson Avenue Clinic, in the Kensington neighborhood, on Massachusetts Avenue, at the Matt Urban Center, at Neighborhood Housing Services, at the Soll Jam and in the William Street and Jefferson Avenue neighborhood.



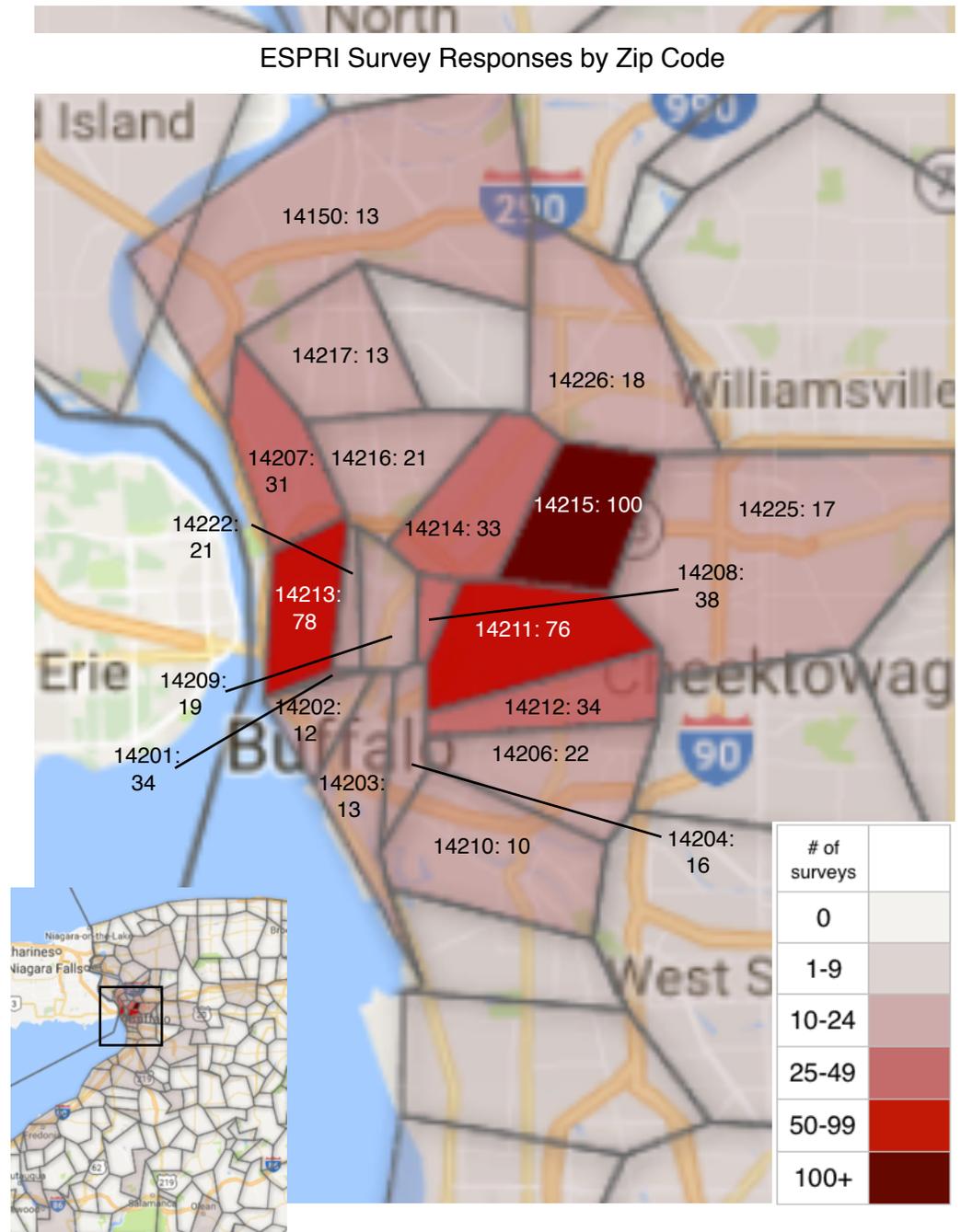
Geographic Distribution of Survey Respondents

Together, the survey collection methods yielded a wide distribution of respondents while achieving the desired result of reaching people who have direct knowledge of financial hardship, and those who live in communities with concentrations of financial hardship.

The highest number of respondents by zip code came from 14215 (100 responses) in the north east section of the city of Buffalo, followed by 14213 (78) on the city's west side and 14211 (76) on the city's east side. Many respondents (154), however, did not provide home zip code information — including many of those collected by The Salvation Army at their emergency shelter.

Zip Code	Number of People in Poverty	Number of Survey Responses
14215	11,563	100
14213	11,110	78
14207	9,316	31
14211	8,630	76
14214	5,471	33
14201	5,272	35
14206	4,883	22
14208	4,170	38
14212	4,049	34
14220	4,010	9

10 Buffalo Zip Codes with highest number of people in poverty (ACS 2015 5-year estimates), shown with number of ESPRI survey responses.

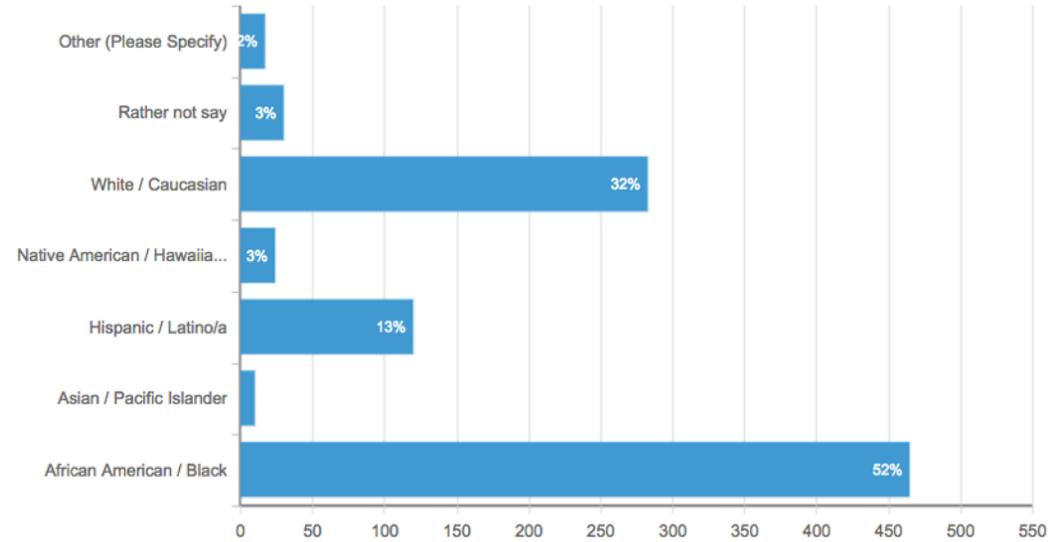


SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

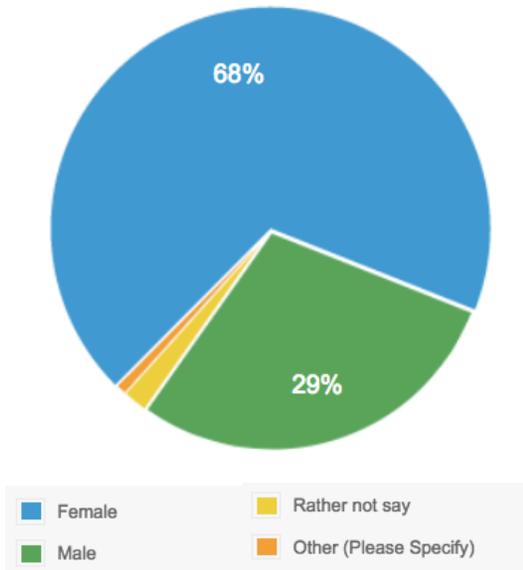
One third of survey respondents live in households with an annual income of less than \$15,000, while another 12% earn between \$15,000 - \$25,000 per year. In total, households making less than \$50,000 comprised 75% of all respondents, while those declaring a household income of \$75,000 or more made up less than 10% of respondents.

Meanwhile, roughly 7 in 10 survey respondents reported being people of color, with 52% reporting African American or Black heritage and 13% reporting Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.

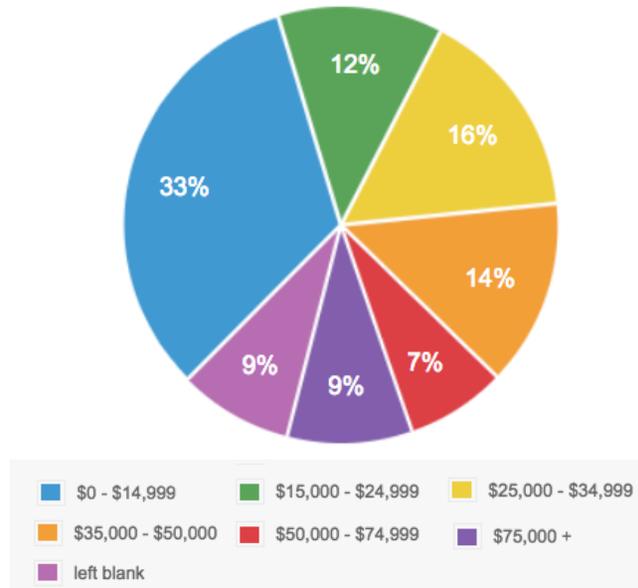
Age distribution was also widespread, with no age group representing 25% or more of respondents. Slightly more than two-thirds of respondents were female.



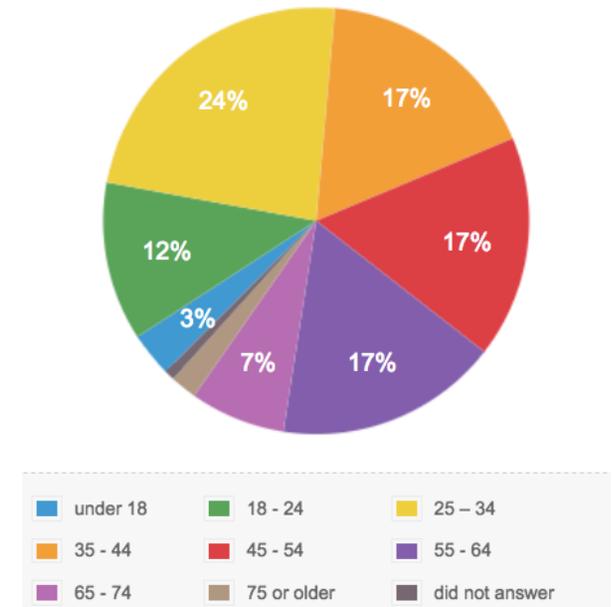
Respondent Race and Ethnicity n=897
(including multiple races and ethnicities per respondent where applicable)



Respondent Gender n=898



Respondent Household Income n=847



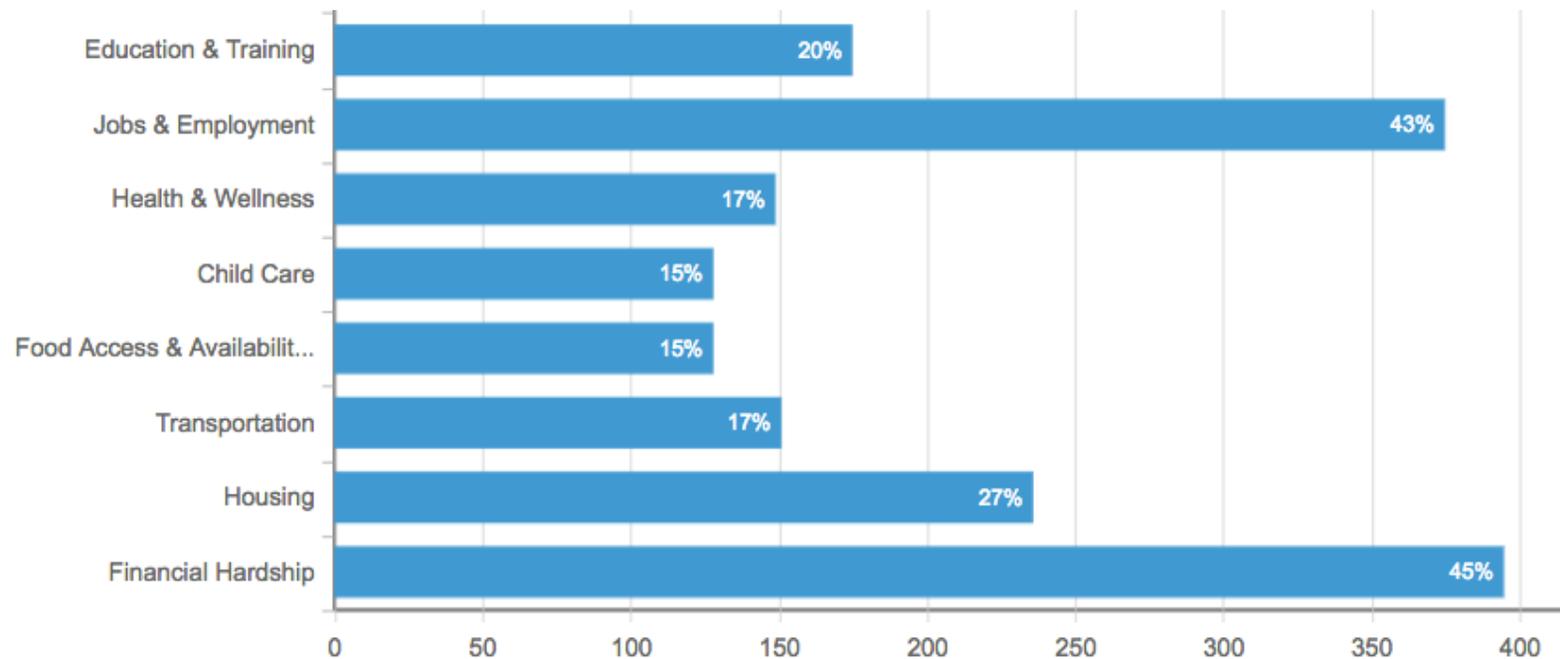
Respondent Age n=897

PRESSING CHALLENGES WITHIN COMMUNITIES

Of 897 useable surveys submitted, 45% of respondents said that financial hardship was among the most pressing challenges faced by their community. Additionally, 43% of respondents said that jobs and employment were among the most pressing challenges in their community. While many survey respondents chose more than one pressing challenge, the preponderance of both of these issues showed a strong elevation of these concerns by community members.

Housing also emerged as a major pressing challenge, with 27% of respondents flagging this issue. Further commentary by survey respondents outlined rising rents and housing prices along with substandard conditions among the primary concerns of community members struggling to make ends meet.

Education and training followed next in frequency of response, with one in five listing this as a pressing challenge. Roughly one in six felt the same for health and wellness, transportation, childcare and food access and availability.



ROOT CAUSES AND UNDERLYING PROBLEMS

Survey respondents were asked to name what causes the poverty and disparities within our region. Many listed more than one factor and of 537 respondents to the question, 830 causes were named. Many of these aligned with the same frameworks designed for the forums and the survey (i.e., training and education, or health and wellness, for example), but many additional systemic causes were mentioned by respondents. In addition, a smaller amount of respondents attributed poverty and disparities to personal or individual behavior.

At a high level, the most frequent explanations for poverty named in the survey involved either the unavailability of or the non-attainment of training and education as a leading factor (18% of responses). 13% of all responses fell under the heading of jobs and employment, either a lack of jobs, inaccessible jobs, or unaccommodating jobs. 12% of responses pointed to money and financial categories, primarily in the form of low wage jobs, but also in the need for financial literacy. Health and wellness (including lack of accessible or affordable health care, health problems, or lack of access to food) made up 3%, while housing, transportation, and childcare each earned 2% of responses.

Among the additional systemic causes listed, discrimination was the most frequently cited, with 9% of responses pointing to some combination of racism, segregation, sexism, ageism, ableism or a lack of language access as a barrier. Broader economic factors, such as cost of living, income inequality, and classism tallied the second highest response rate (7%). A legacy of community disinvestment comprised 5% of responses, as did safety, crime and

criminal justice, while social services being mismatched or inadequate to needs comprised 4% as did a lack of social networks and supports. Governmental and political factors logged 3% of responses and a lack of youth supports tallied 1%.

Myriad causes that placed root problems as the fault of individuals, from attributing a lack of desire to improve one's situation to citing a lack of confidence, comprised a combined 10% of all responses.

NAMED SYSTEMIC CAUSES		430
TRAINING & EDUCATION		2
Lack of education opportunities/ quality education		111
Lack of training opportunities		38
TOTAL		151
JOBS & EMPLOYMENT		
Lack of jobs		86
Jobs are inaccessible		11
Jobs are not flexible to accommodate care givers		8
TOTAL		105
MONEY & FINANCIAL		11
Low wages [/ wages do not cover or keep up with cost of living]		74
No financial literacy		16
TOTAL		101

Top number of survey responses for systemic causes of poverty and disparities in the region (continued next page).

NAMED SYSTEMIC CAUSES (Continued)	
HOUSING	
Lack of quality / affordable housing	20
TOTAL	20
TRANSPORTATION	
Inadequate transit options	16
TOTAL	16
CHILDCARE	
Lack of childcare	12
TOTAL	12
HEALTH & WELLNESS	
Lack of healthcare/ Cost of healthcare	11
Health problems	9
Food deserts & access	5
TOTAL	25

ADDITIONAL SYSTEMIC CAUSES		318
DISCRIMINATION		
Racism & segregation		60
Sexism/ pay equity		4
Ageism		2
Language barriers		6
TOTAL		72
ECONOMIC STRUCTURE		
Cost of living / price gouging		31
Classism/ Power and decisions are controlled by the wealthy		10
Income inequality		10
Capitalism		3
Greed		3
TOTAL		57
SAFETY / CRIMINAL JUSTICE		
Drugs		26
Criminalization/ police reform		13
Violence		6
TOTAL		45

ADDITIONAL SYSTEMIC CAUSES (continued)	
COMMUNITY DISINVESTMENT	
Structural/ generational poverty	16
Gentrification	11
Lack of Opportunity	9
Development patterns/ sprawl	4
Inertia	2
TOTAL	38
SOCIAL NETWORKS AND SUPPORTS	
Lack of knowledge	21
Lack of unity	6
Lack of family supports	6
lack of religion	2
Lack of senior supports	1
TOTAL	36
SOCIAL SERVICES	
Social services inadequate/ a mismatch	32
TOTAL	32
GOVERNMENT	
Disconnected power structure / politics/ government	23
High taxes	4
TOTAL	27
YOUTH	
Lack of youth supports	11
TOTAL	11

INDIVIDUAL / BEHAVIORAL CAUSES		82
Lack of desire to improve own situation		17
Family structure		13
Over reliance on public assistance		13
People are lazy		11
Assorted individual causes		10
Self control/ lack of future plan or viewpoint		8
Lack of confidence / fear		5
Lack of parental involvement		5

CHANGES NEEDED FOR FINANCIAL STABILITY

Survey respondents were asked to name what needs to change in order for people in their community to have financial stability.

508 respondents answered the question and, as a whole, contributed 728 ideas for what changes need to be made. As with root causes, many of these responses fit within the engagement issue framework. Others aligned with the additional systemic causes identified by community members through the survey. Once again, a smaller percentage of responses pointed to individual behavioral changes as the route to community financial stability.

Training and education was again the top response, representing 20% of all answers. Changes needed within these systems were nuanced, however, with the most frequent among them calling for more or better job training — including free or paying options in some cases — with an equal amount calling for more schooling or improved education opportunities.

Next in order of response volume, the categories of jobs/ employment and money/ financial each received an equal number of occurrences (both with 17% of responses).

Most of the jobs and employment responses focused on the volume of jobs available while a substantial amount also focused on job quality, accessibility, or awareness.

The bulk of the money and financial responses, however, focused not on a net volume of overall jobs, but on better paying jobs or raising the minimum or living wage. Nearly a

quarter of responses in this category called for improved financial literacy.

Affordable housing, homeownership and landlord accountability changes accounted for 4% of responses, transportation and childcare each accounted for 3%, and health and wellness accounted for 2%.

Topping the list of additional systemic changes was enhancing social networks and supports (8%), including cooperation, enhancing community knowledge of what is available, and improving mentoring and support.

Ending prejudice and discrimination (racism, sexism, and more) was the next most frequent needed change named (5%), followed by reforming social services and improving wrap around services (4%). Economic restructuring was next most frequent (3%), with lowering the cost of living or instituting price controls on necessities and utilities, reducing income inequality, and investing in lower-income and middle-class communities among the most frequent suggestions.

At 2% of responses each, community reinvestment, government and political accountability and reform, safety and criminal justice issues, and enhanced youth opportunities rounded out the suggestions for additional systemic changes.

6% of responses indicated changes to personal behavior issues and choice, such as over spending instead of saving, or instilling a will for self improvement represented answers to community wide financial stability.

Survey respondent answers to what needs to change in order for people in their community to have financial stability.

CHANGES TO NAMED SYSTEMS		487
TRAINING & EDUCATION		3
Better (/free /paid) job training		60
More education		46
Improve the school system		14
Reduce college tuition/ debt		10
Trade schools		6
Education (reform)		5
Family supports in the schools		1
Promote job training programs		1
Promote education/ educational awareness		1
Education (investments in)		1
	TOTAL	148
JOBS & EMPLOYMENT		3
A better job market / more jobs		80
Better jobs		17
Accessible jobs		9
More job fairs and job finding assistance		8
Job ladders		7
Support for small/ local business		3
	TOTAL	127
MONEY & FINANCIAL		
Better paying jobs		54
Financial literacy classes		32
Higher minimum wage / living wage		29
Respect and decent wages for all jobs		4

MONEY & FINANCIAL (Continued)		
Appropriate access to banking		4
Financial system changes / challenges		3
Benefit requirements for all jobs		1
	TOTAL	127
HOUSING		1
Affordable housing		15
Control rent and property tax		4
Homeownership		3
Code enforcement/ landlord accountability		3
	TOTAL	26
TRANSPORTATION		3
Increase transportation		8
Need routes to jobs		7
Transit needs to be equitable		3
	TOTAL	21
CHILD CARE		3
	Child care availability	10
	Child care affordability and assistance	10
	TOTAL	23
HEALTH & WELLNESS		
Health care affordability		6
Support for those with mental illness/ behavior health		4
Health care availability		29
Rehab facilities		2
	TOTAL	15

ADDITIONAL SYSTEMIC CHANGES		197
SOCIAL NETWORKS AND SUPPORTS		4
Cooperation/ working together		18
Knowledge of what's available		11
Mentorship and coaching		7
Support for the aging/ elderly		3
Prayer/ religion		3
United families		2
More community centers		2
Restoring hope		2
Being bold		1
Self love		1
People need a second chance		1
TOTAL	55	
ENDING DISCRIMINATION		
Eliminate racism		9
Equal opportunity (race and gender)		7
Reduce prejudice in hiring		7
Empowerment of disenfranchised groups		3
Language access		2
TOTAL	33	
SOCIAL SERVICES		1
Social service reform		19
Wrap around services		9
Income supplements		2
TOTAL	31	

ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING		
Cost of living reduction/ Price controls on necessities		11
Investments in lower-income & middle class/ reducing income inequality		4
End capitalism		3
Socialism		1
Socially responsible businesses		1
TOTAL	20	
COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT		
Investment in poor neighborhoods		11
Community redevelopment jobs		3
Support for community instead of wealthy developers		2
Black owned businesses		1
TOTAL	17	
GOVERNMENT		1
Government accountability		5
Politicians		4
High taxes		4
Revolution		1
Government stop bothering us		1
TOTAL	16	
SAFETY / CRIMINAL JUSTICE		
Keep drugs out		6
Stop the violence		4
Less oppressive policing practices		4
TOTAL	14	
YOUTH		6
Youth job opportunities		4
Summer youth opportunities		1
TOTAL	11	

INDIVIDUAL / BEHAVIORAL		44
Saving / stop buying non-necessities / budgeting		16
People need to want to help themselves		13
People need to be willing to work		13
More parental involvement		11

DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

- Online v. Paper Surveys

The digital divide was clear in survey response by distribution method, with online responses characterized by responses from a whiter, wealthier audience with higher levels of education.

Paper Surveys n=708	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than high school	4.2%	30
Some high school	14.3%	101
Completed high school or GED	24.0%	170
Some college or technical school	24.3%	172
Two-year degree (Associates)	9.3%	66
Four-year degree (Bachelors)	11.2%	79
Some graduate school	2.5%	18
Graduate degree or higher	9.0%	64
did not answer	1.1%	8

African American / Black	58.3%	413
Asian / Pacific Islander	0.9%	6
Hispanic / Latino/a	16.0%	113
Native American / Hawaiian	3.1%	22
White / Caucasian	23.2%	164
Rather not say	3.0%	21
Other	2.1%	15

Online Surveys n=190	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than high school	0.5%	1
Some high school	1.1%	2
Completed high school or GED	3.7%	7
Some college or technical school	15.3%	29
Two-year degree (Associates)	10.5%	20
Four-year degree (Bachelors)	25.8%	49
Some graduate school	6.3%	12
Graduate degree or higher	36.8%	70
did not answer	0.0%	0

African American / Black	27.9%	53
Asian / Pacific Islander	2.1%	4
Hispanic / Latino/a	3.7%	7
Native American / Hawaiian	1.1%	2
White / Caucasian	62.6%	119
Rather not say	4.7%	9
Other	1.1%	2

Paper Responses n=687	Response Percent	Response Count
\$0 - \$14,999	39.3%	270
\$15,000 - \$24,999	12.5%	86
\$25,000 - \$34,999	14.7%	101
\$35,000 - \$50,000	10.3%	71
\$50,000 - \$74,999	6.4%	44
\$75,000 +	6.4%	44
left blank	10.3%	71

Online Responses n = 160	Response Percent	Response Count
\$0 - \$14,999	5.0%	8
\$15,000 - \$24,999	11.3%	18
\$25,000 - \$34,999	20.6%	33
\$35,000 - \$50,000	28.8%	46
\$50,000 - \$74,999	11.9%	19
\$75,000 +	21.9%	35
left blank	0.6%	1

Most Pressing Challenge* Paper Survey n=705	% of Responses	Response Count	Percent of Respondents who chose
Financial Hardship	22.0%	352	49.93%
Housing	13.4%	215	30.5%
Transportation	8.4%	134	19.01%
Food Access & Availability	7.7%	124	17.59%
Child Care	6.7%	107	15.18%
Health & Wellness	8.6%	138	19.57%
Jobs & Employment	20.4%	326	46.24%
Education & Training	9.9%	158	22.41%
Other	2.9%	47	6.67%

Most Pressing Challenge Online Survey n=177	Response Percent	Response Count
Financial Hardship	24.3%	43
Housing	11.9%	21
Transportation	9.6%	17
Food Access & Availability	2.3%	4
Child Care	11.9%	21
Health & Wellness	6.2%	11
Jobs & Employment	27.7%	49
Education & Training	9.6%	17
Other	4.5%	8

* Paper Survey Respondents were able to enter more than one pressing challenge. Online respondents were not.

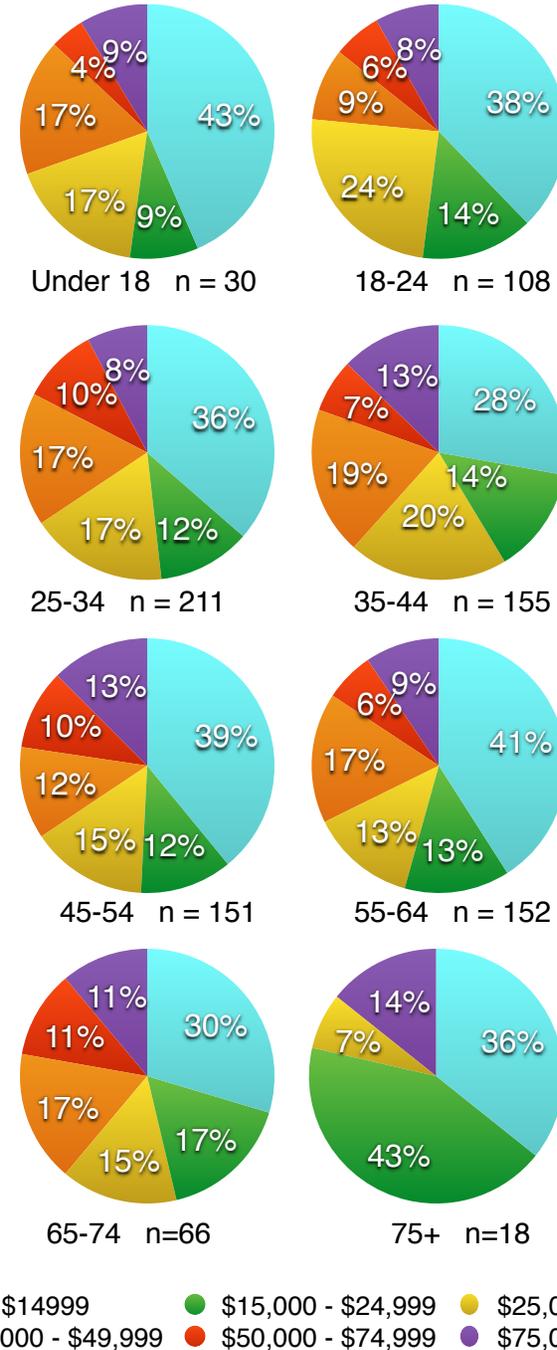
- Income Variation

Across the board, the respondents' annual income levels clustered largely below \$50,000, with 82% of respondents who answered the income question reporting household income below this threshold. Only 10% of those who answered the question reported household incomes above \$75,000 annually. Conversely, 36% of respondents reported incomes of less than \$15,000, below the poverty level for an individual or family of any size.

Though there were not clear income trends by age, only in the 35-44 cohort did less than 45% of respondents report annual household incomes of less than \$25,000.

Reported Household Income n = 847	Percentage of respondents that answered	Number of Responses
\$0 - \$14,999	35.9%	278
\$15,000 - \$24,999	13.4%	104
\$25,000 - \$34,999	17.3%	134
\$35,000 - \$50,000	15.1%	117
\$50,000 - \$74,999	8.1%	63
\$75,000 +	10.2%	79
left blank	n/a	72

Respondent Income Strata By Age



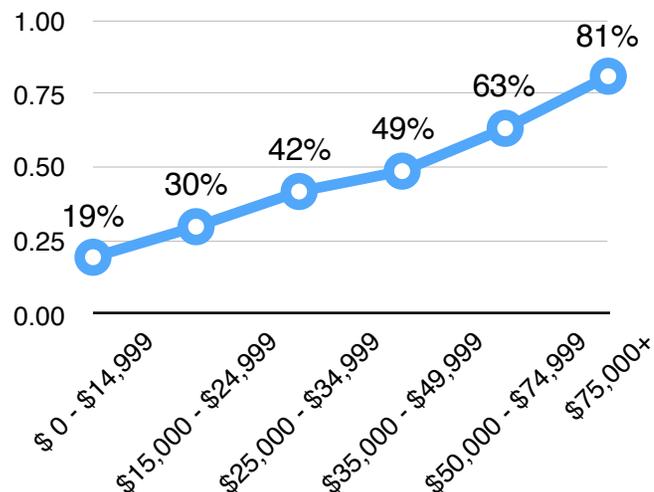
JOBS & EMPLOYMENT

The percentage of respondents who had full time jobs increased steadily among those with higher annual household incomes.

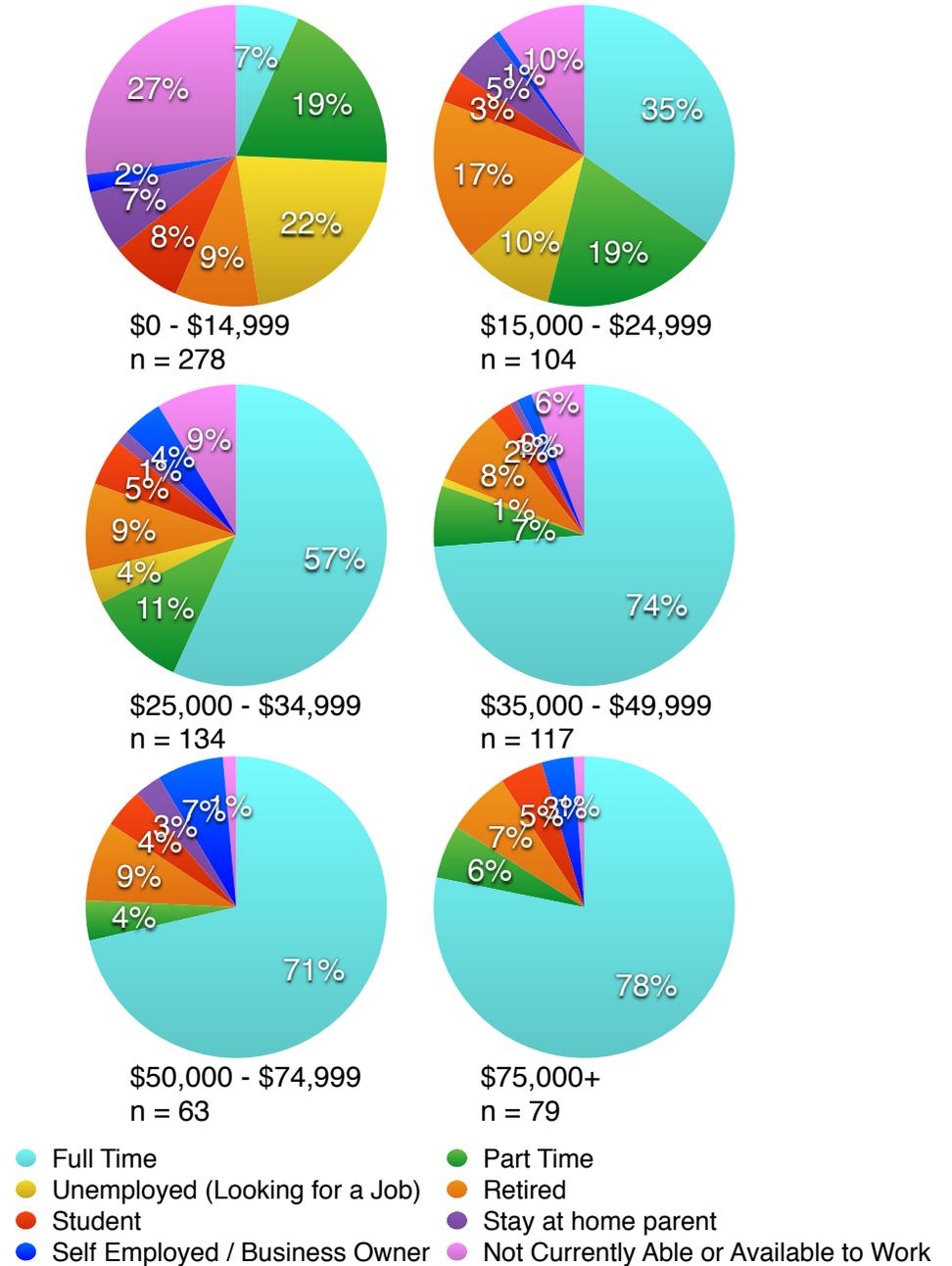
Unsurprisingly, this was the inverse trend of the percentage of respondents unavailable or unable to work, as well as the percentage of residents who were unemployed but looking for a job. Respondents who were stay at home parents represented 7% of the lowest income strata (less than \$15,000 annually) and 5% of the respondents from households earning \$15,000 - \$24,999, but less than 3% of all other income strata.

Also increasing steadily for higher income households was the percentage of respondents that reported more that another of their household was employed, with less than 19% of those under \$15,000 but more than 80% of those over \$75,000.

Percent of Respondents Reporting That Other People in Their Household are Employed Per Income Level



Respondent Work Status By Income Strata



Respondents were able to select more than one answer, percentages may not total to 100%.

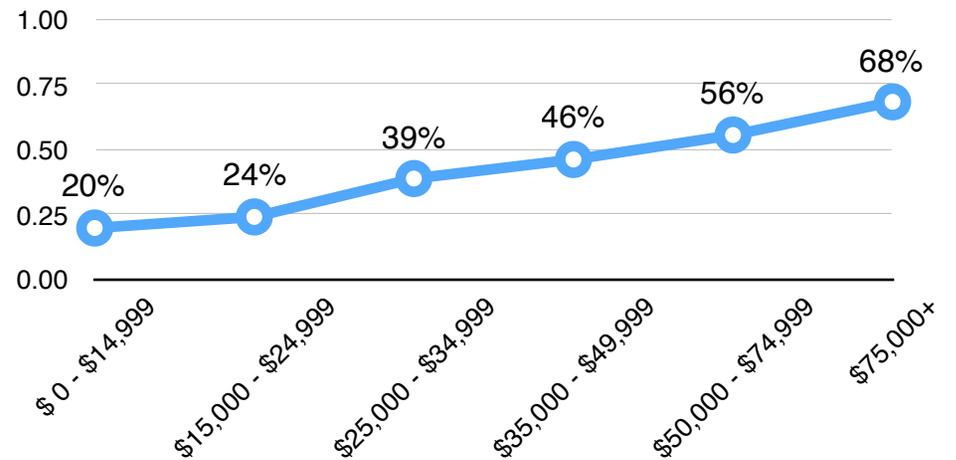
Perhaps the most striking variation in responses by income stratification appeared the barriers to work question. More than two-thirds of respondents with household incomes at or above \$75,000 reported no barriers to work for members of their households. This percentage shrank steadily for each smaller income group until less than one in five earning less than \$15,000 reported no barriers to work.

In general, the choices offered as survey responses as barriers to work fell into two categories:

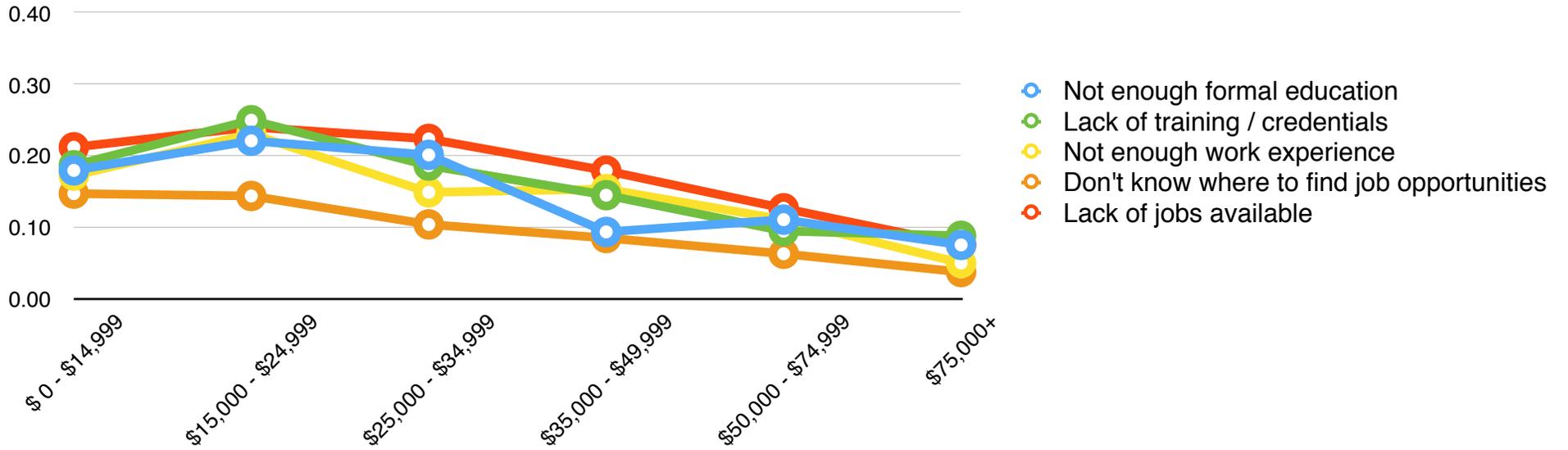
- 1) direct barriers to employment (education, training, work experience, job awareness and availability); and
- 2) secondary barriers to employment (transportation, incarceration or criminal history, child care, health, language, digital literacy or connectivity).

For barriers within both of these categories, these challenges lessened in mostly consistent succession for respondents at increasingly higher income brackets.

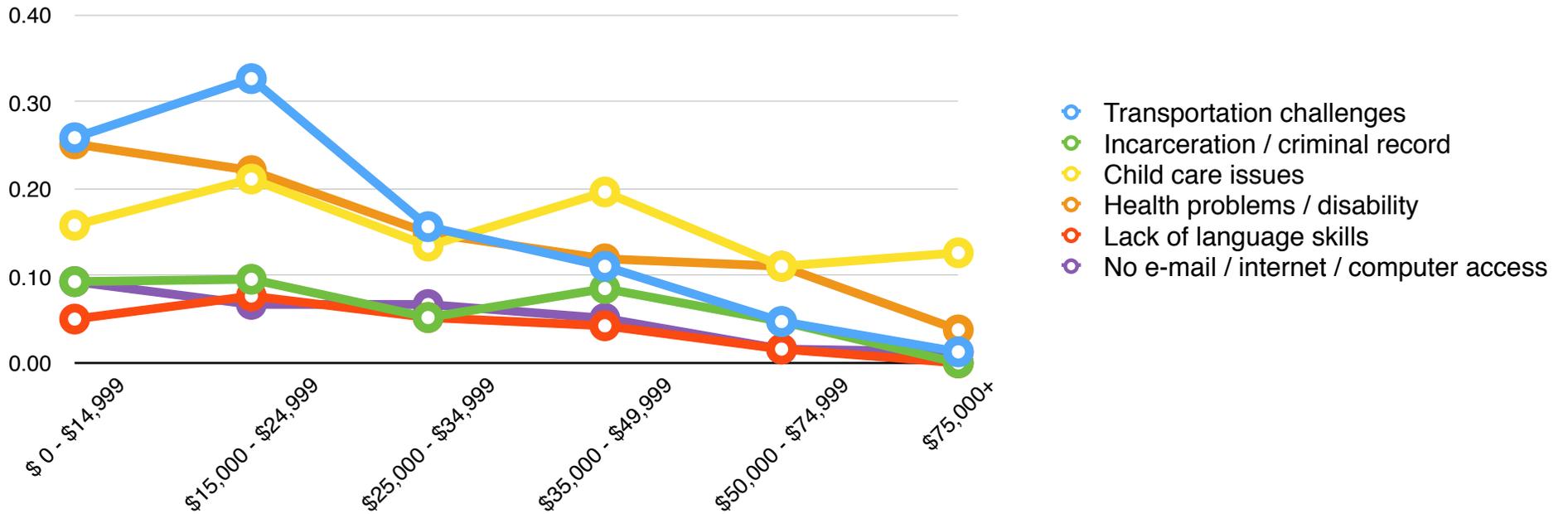
Percent of Respondents Reporting No Barriers to Work Per Income Level



Percentage of Respondents by Income Group Reporting Direct Barriers to Employment

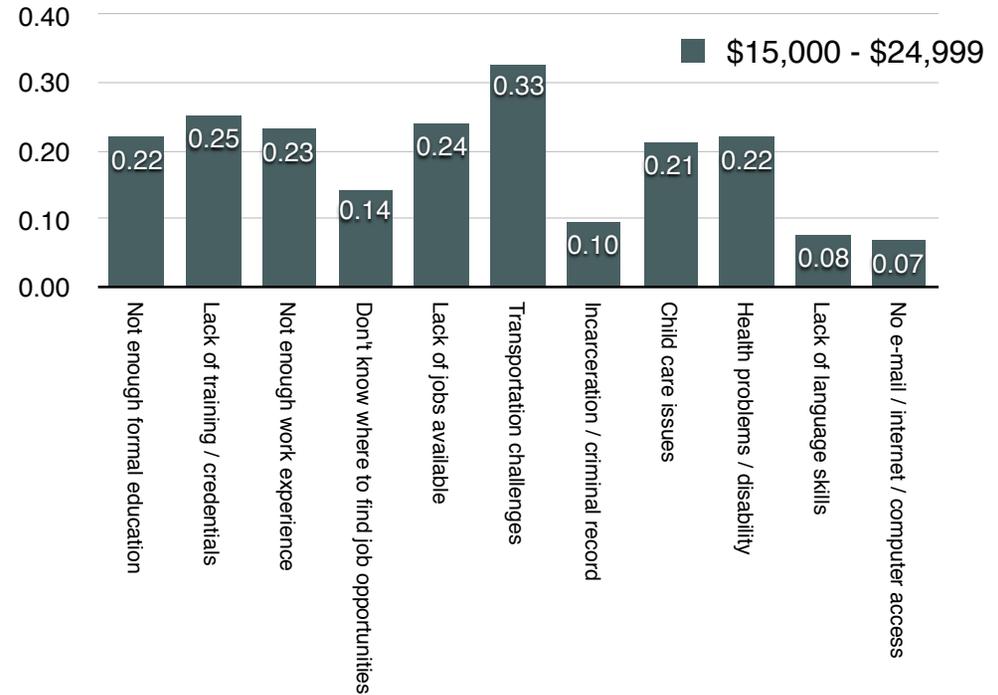
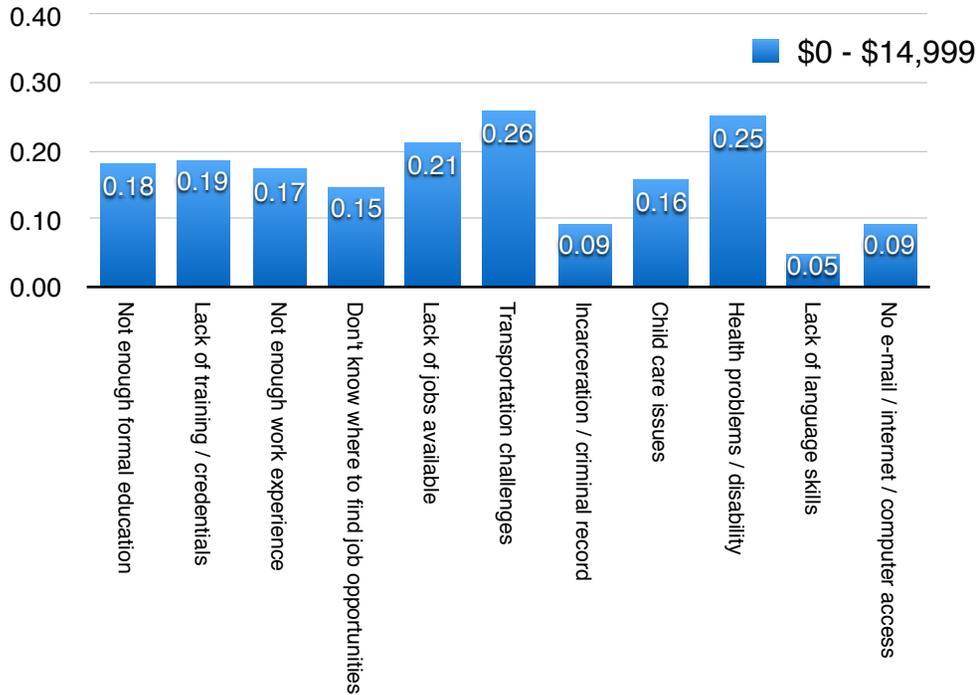


Percentage of Respondents by Income Group Reporting Secondary Barriers to Employment

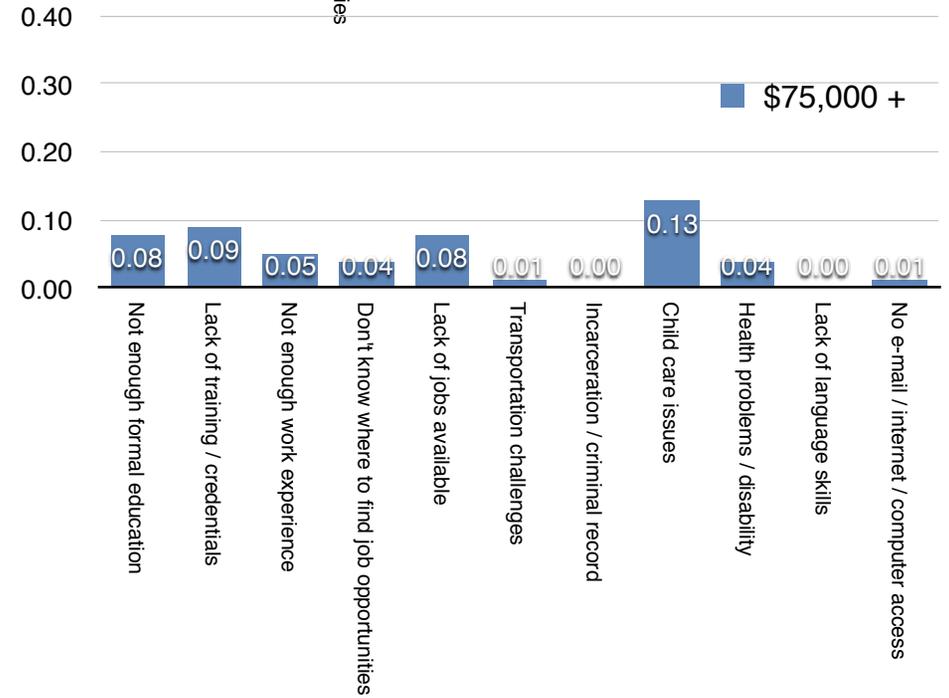
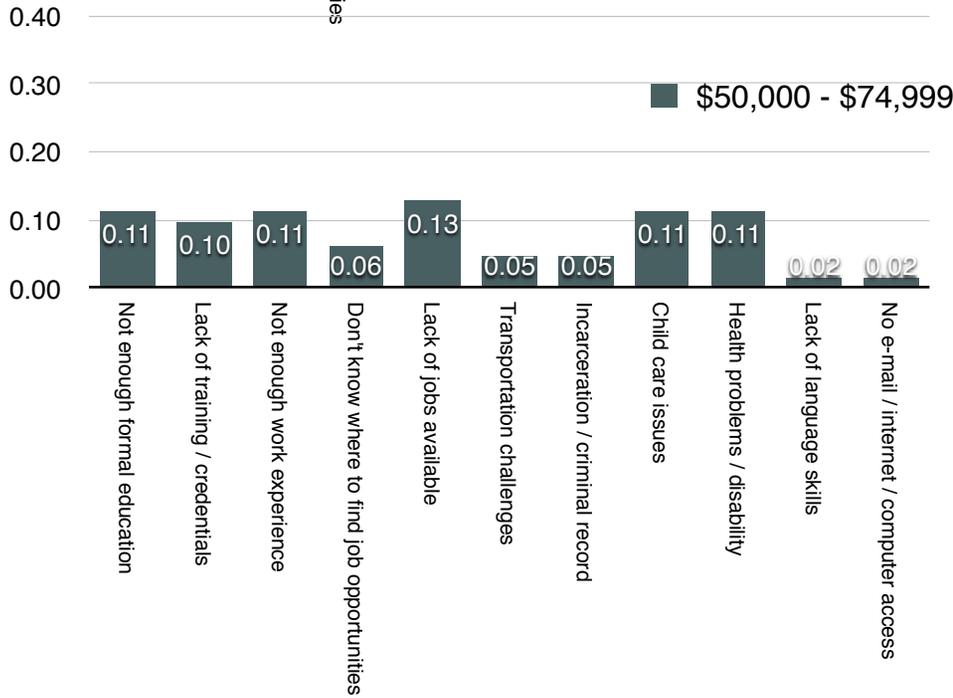
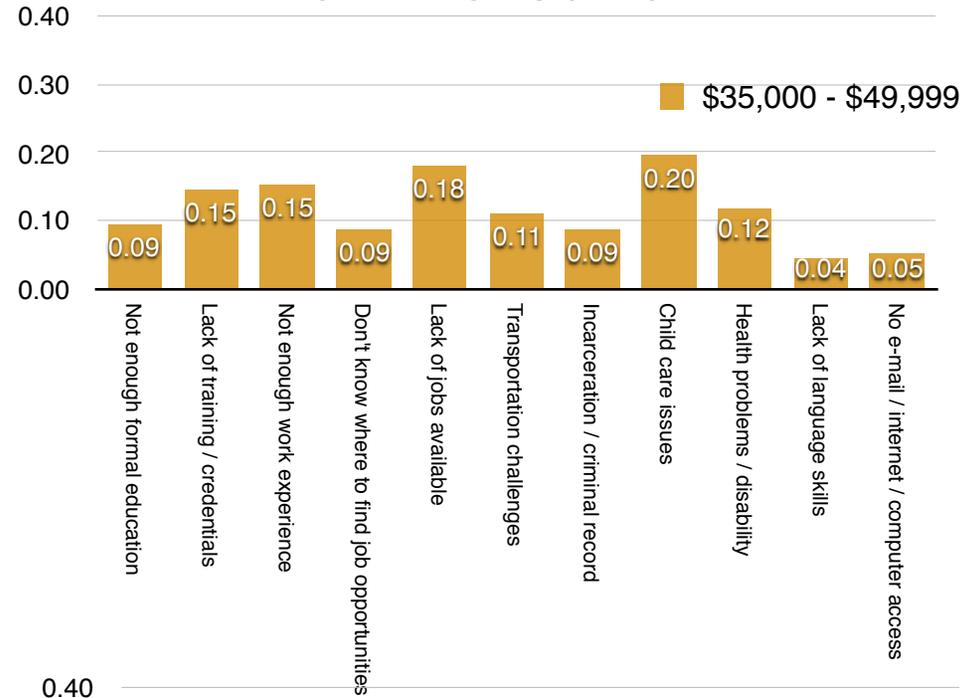
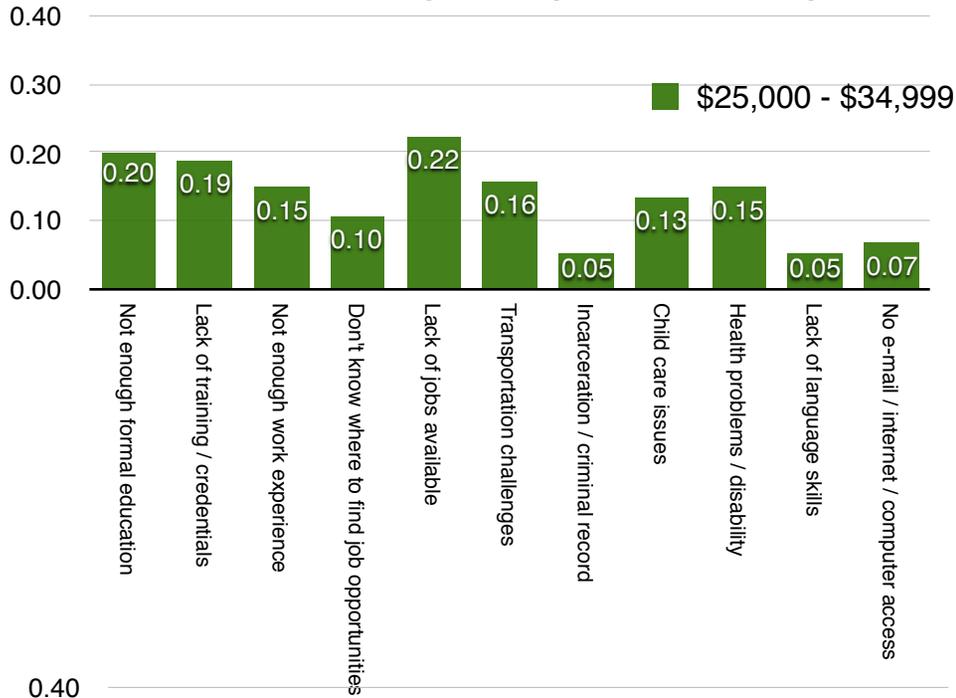


Percentage of respondents who reported selected barriers to work by income group

Reported Household Income	No barriers to work	Not enough formal education	Lack of training / credentials	Not enough work experience	Don't know where to find job opportunities	Lack of jobs available	Transportation challenges	Incarceration / criminal record	Child care issues	Health problems / disability	Lack of language skills	No e-mail / internet / computer access	did not answer	Respondent Count
\$0 - \$14,999	19.78% (55)	17.99% (50)	18.71% (52)	17.27% (48)	14.75% (41)	21.22% (59)	25.9% (72)	9.35% (26)	15.83% (44)	25.18% (70)	5.04% (14)	9.35% (26)	1.8% (5)	278
\$15,000 - \$24,999	24.04% (25)	22.12% (23)	25.0% (26)	23.08% (24)	14.42% (15)	24.04% (25)	32.69% (34)	9.62% (10)	21.15% (22)	22.12% (23)	7.69% (8)	6.73% (7)	1.92% (2)	104
\$25,000 - \$34,999	38.81% (52)	20.15% (27)	18.66% (25)	14.93% (20)	10.45% (14)	22.39% (30)	15.67% (21)	5.22% (7)	13.43% (18)	14.93% (20)	5.22% (7)	6.72% (9)	1.49% (2)	134
\$35,000 - \$49,999	46.15% (54)	9.4% (11)	14.53% (17)	15.38% (18)	8.55% (10)	17.95% (21)	11.11% (13)	8.55% (10)	19.66% (23)	11.97% (14)	4.27% (5)	5.13% (6)	1.71% (2)	117
\$50,000 - \$74,999	55.56% (35)	11.11% (7)	9.52% (6)	11.11% (7)	6.35% (4)	12.7% (8)	4.76% (3)	4.76% (3)	11.11% (7)	11.11% (7)	1.59% (1)	1.59% (1)	4.76% (3)	63
\$75,000 +	68.35% (54)	7.59% (6)	8.86% (7)	5.06% (4)	3.8% (3)	7.59% (6)	1.27% (1)	0.0% (0)	12.66% (10)	3.8% (3)	0.0% (0)	1.27% (1)	3.8% (3)	79
<i>did not answer income question</i>	31.94% (23)	15.28% (11)	13.89% (10)	8.33% (6)	13.89% (10)	15.28% (11)	9.72% (7)	4.17% (3)	13.89% (10)	22.22% (16)	5.56% (4)	4.17% (3)	2.78% (2)	72



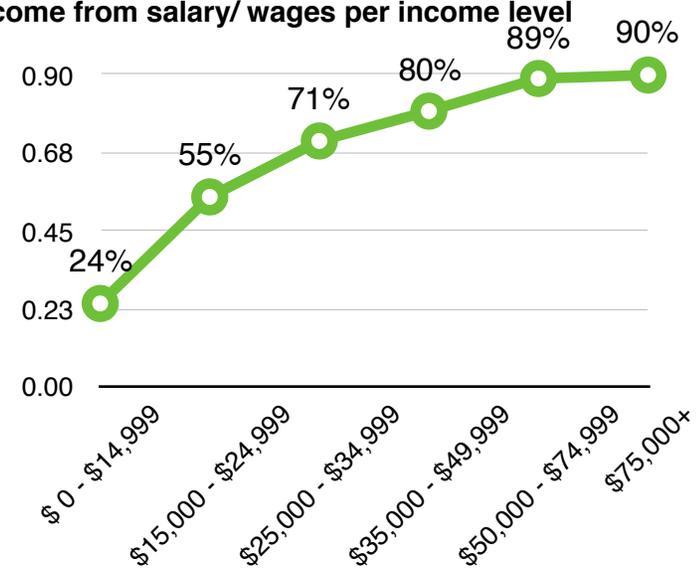
Percentage of respondents who reported selected barriers to work by income group (cont.)



MONEY & FINANCES

While most higher income households reported deriving their incomes from salary and wages, households in lower earning strata reported a greater mix of financial sources. Less than one quarter of respondents with incomes less than \$15,000 per year reported income from wages or salary, while slightly fewer reported Social Security Insurance (SSI) or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) income. Roughly one in six reported Social Security Disability (SSD) income. For respondents in the next highest income bracket (\$15,000 - \$24,999), the number reporting wages or salary more than doubled and continued to increase for each successive income bracket.

Percentage of respondents who reported receiving income from salary/ wages per income level



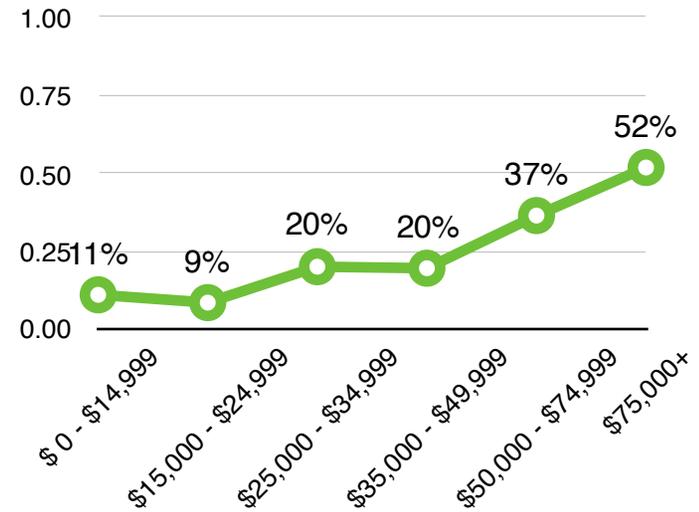
Reported sources of income received by Income Strata*

	Salary / Wages from Work	SSI	SSD	TANF	Child Support	Short Term Disability	Pension	Other Retirement	Respondent Count
\$0 - \$14,999	24.1%	23.0%	15.8%	21.2%	7.6%	0.7%	2.5%	1.4%	278
\$15,000 - \$24,999	54.8%	16.4%	13.5%	5.8%	7.7%	1.9%	8.7%	1.9%	104
\$25,000 - \$34,999	70.9%	11.2%	6.0%	2.2%	5.2%	0.8%	8.2%	3.0%	134
\$35,000 - \$49,999	79.5%	3.4%	6.8%	0.0%	6.0%	0.0%	4.3%	2.6%	117
\$50,000 - \$74,999	88.9%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%	9.5%	3.2%	63
\$75,000 +	89.9%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%	5.1%	0.0%	3.8%	1.3%	79
<i>did not answer income question</i>	12.5%	23.6%	12.5%	2.8%	4.2%	0.0%	8.3%	1.4%	72

* multiple answers permitted per respondent; 144 "other" types of income responses were received, however, these responses were unable to be sorted by income strata

Though, in general, the percentage of respondents reporting challenges to building financial savings followed an expected trend of decreasing barriers as income increases, there were some variations in the data. Respondents in households with incomes less than \$15,000 actually reported challenges with creditors or debt less frequently than any other income bracket. However, these respondents and those earning up to \$25,000 most frequently reported a lack of access to banking as a barrier to saving. Interestingly the highest and lowest income brackets reported assisting family members or friends financially as a barrier to a lesser extent than the other income groupings.

Percentage of respondents who reported no barriers to savings per income level



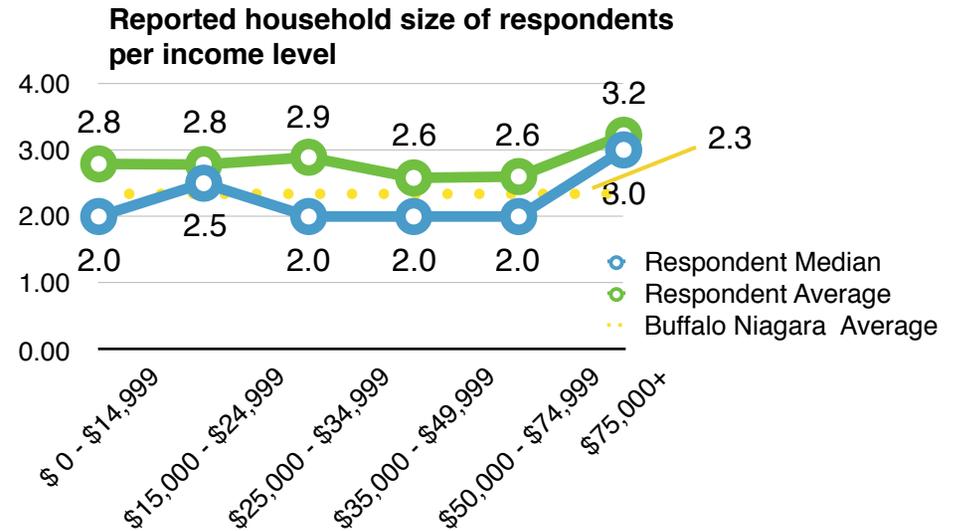
Barriers to Building up Financial Savings by Income Strata*

	Not enough money after paying for necessities	Creditors / debt	Would lose benefits / financial assistance	Assisting family members or friends	Do not have access to banking	No, I don't face any barriers to saving	Respondent Count
\$0 - \$14,999	74.1%	17.6%	8.6%	5.4%	6.8%	11.2%	278
\$15,000 - \$24,999	78.9%	42.3%	14.4%	16.4%	6.7%	8.7%	104
\$25,000 - \$34,999	60.5%	33.6%	7.5%	14.2%	2.2%	20.2%	134
\$35,000 - \$50,000	54.7%	41.9%	6.8%	16.2%	1.7%	19.7%	117
\$50,000 - \$74,999	38.1%	27.0%	1.6%	14.3%	0.0%	36.5%	63
\$75,000 +	24.1%	25.3%	0.0%	5.1%	0.0%	51.9%	79
<i>did not answer income question</i>	37.5%	12.5%	2.8%	6.9%	2.8%	16.7%	72

* multiple answers permitted per respondent

HOUSEHOLDS & HOUSING

Reported household size for respondents was somewhat higher than that recorded by the 2015 Census ACS for the region (2.34), but did not show consistent trend lines for upper or lower incomes households. However, among income groups, the highest percentage of respondents living alone were among those earning less than \$15,000 and the smallest percentage living alone were those earning \$75,000 or more.



Household Size by Income Strata											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 or more	Respondent Count
\$0 - \$14,999	30.2%	23.4%	18.0%	8.6%	8.3%	4.3%	1.8%	0.7%	0.7%	1.4%	278
\$15,000 - \$24,999	23.1%	26.0%	17.3%	18.3%	9.6%	1.9%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	104
\$25,000 - \$34,999	19.4%	29.9%	20.9%	11.9%	7.5%	3.7%	3.0%	0.8%	0.8%	0.0%	134
\$35,000 - \$50,000	23.9%	31.6%	19.7%	10.3%	10.3%	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	117
\$50,000 - \$74,999	19.1%	38.1%	15.9%	15.9%	7.9%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	63
\$75,000 +	3.8%	31.7%	24.1%	26.6%	11.4%	0.0%	1.3%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	79
<i>did not answer income question</i>	37.5%	19.4%	19.4%	8.3%	9.7%	2.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	72

Homeownership increases steadily among respondents for increasingly higher income brackets. While less than one in ten respondents earning less than \$15,000 reported owning a home, less than one in six earning \$15,000 - \$24,999, and less than one in five earning \$25,000 - \$34,999, more than three quarters of those earning \$75,000 reported homeownership.

According to Census Bureau statistics, this compares to homeownership rates of 65% for the Buffalo-Niagara region, and 40% within the city of Buffalo. These differentials are significant because homeownership is, for most Americans, the greatest source of family wealth.

Wealth, even more than income, can be a signifier of opportunity for families and their children.

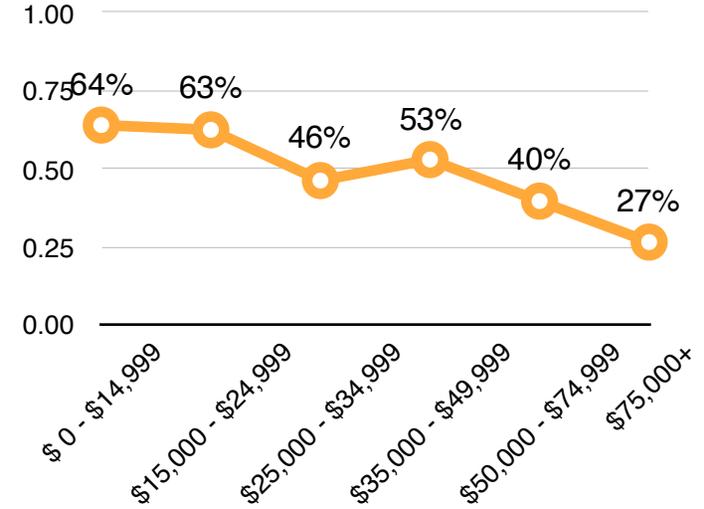
Meanwhile roughly 65% of all respondents in the three lowest income brackets reported paying rent, which leaves these populations exposed to escalating housing costs and potential displacement as demand grows throughout the city of Buffalo.

Current Living Arrangement by Income Strata

	I own my home	I rent a home or an apartment	I share an apartment with someone else and pay rent	I live with my family and do not pay rent	I live with someone else (non-family) and do not pay rent	I live in a dorm or other group setting	I am currently homeless	Respondent Count
\$0 - \$14,999	9.4%	57.9%	6.1%	7.9%	2.9%	1.4%	3.6%	278
\$15,000 - \$24,999	14.4%	58.7%	8.7%	12.5%	1.0%	1.0%	0.0%	104
\$25,000 - \$34,999	19.4%	56.0%	9.0%	8.2%	0.0%	0.8%	0.8%	134
\$35,000 - \$50,000	35.9%	48.7%	6.0%	6.8%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	117
\$50,000 - \$74,999	54.0%	33.3%	1.6%	6.4%	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%	63
\$75,000 +	78.5%	7.6%	3.8%	5.1%	0.0%	2.5%	0.0%	79
<i>did not answer income question</i>	16.7%	51.4%	4.2%	12.5%	2.8%	0.0%	0.0%	72

In fact, nearing two-thirds of respondents in households earning less than \$25,000 per year worry about paying their rent or mortgage. For four in ten respondents earning less than \$15,000, this worry is always present, as it is for roughly one third of those earning between \$15,000 and \$24,999. When combined with the respondents who used to worry about paying their housing costs but do not currently, nearly three quarters of respondents in households earning under \$25,000 have experienced concerns about paying their rent or mortgage.

Percentage of Respondents who “Sometimes” or “All the time” worry about paying their rent or mortgage per income level

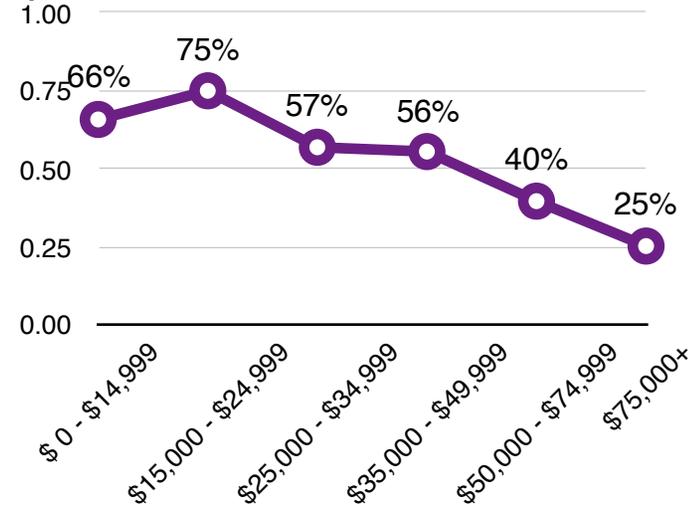


Worried about paying rent or mortgage by Income Strata						
	All the time	Sometimes	I used to, but don't right now	Never	I don't have rent / mortgage to pay	Respondent Count
\$0 - \$14,999	40.3%	23.7%	9.4%	13.3%	6.8%	278
\$15,000 - \$24,999	32.7%	29.8%	9.6%	15.4%	9.6%	104
\$25,000 - \$34,999	20.9%	25.4%	17.2%	20.2%	9.7%	134
\$35,000 - \$50,000	16.2%	36.8%	16.2%	18.0%	10.3%	117
\$50,000 - \$74,999	7.9%	31.8%	19.1%	23.8%	12.7%	63
\$75,000 +	8.9%	17.7%	16.5%	44.3%	11.4%	79
<i>did not answer income question</i>	23.6%	26.4%	6.9%	23.6%	9.7%	72

However, for these lower income populations, the percentage of respondents who worry about paying their utility bills is even greater. More than seven in ten of all respondents earning less than \$50,000 have experienced worries about paying their utility bill.

75% of those earning \$15,000 - \$24,999 worry about paying their utility bills currently. Decreasing percentages of respondents worry about paying utility bills in successively higher income brackets, but even for the highest earners, 25% still worry about making these ends meet.

Percentage of Respondents who “Sometimes” or “All the time” worry about paying their gas, electric or water bills per income level



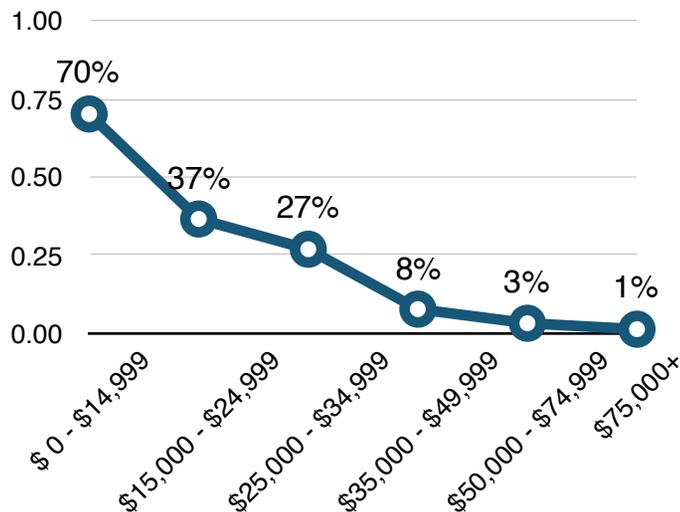
Percentage of respondents who worry about being able to afford their gas, electric or water bills by Income Strata						
	All the time	Sometimes	I used to, but don't right now	Never	I don't have any gas, electric or water bills to pay	Respondent Count
\$0 - \$14,999	42.09%	23.74%	7.55%	13.67%	6.12%	278
\$15,000 - \$24,999	37.5%	37.5%	1.92%	15.38%	4.81%	104
\$25,000 - \$34,999	26.87%	30.6%	15.67%	19.4%	4.48%	134
\$35,000 - \$50,000	17.09%	38.46%	17.09%	17.09%	5.98%	117
\$50,000 - \$74,999	3.17%	36.51%	20.63%	34.92%	0.0%	63
\$75,000 +	2.53%	22.78%	18.99%	49.37%	5.06%	79
<i>did not answer income question</i>	26.39%	27.78%	6.94%	18.06%	9.72%	72

FOOD ACCESS & SECURITY

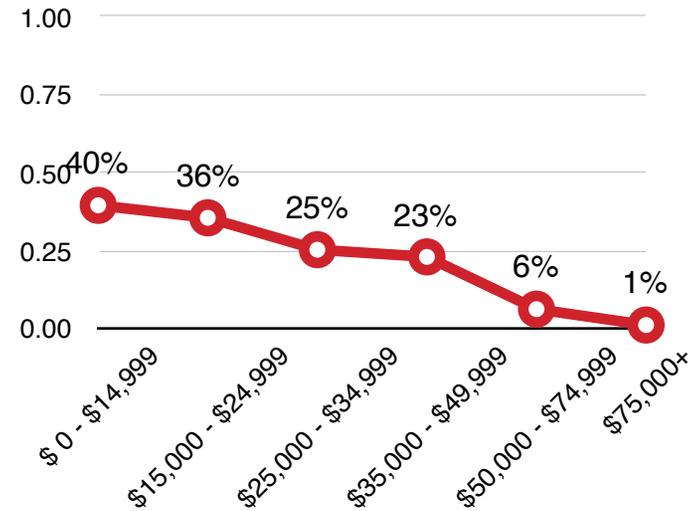
There was a consistent decrease in the percentage of respondents who reported struggling to afford food as household incomes increased. The challenge significantly decreased once incomes passed a \$50,000 annual threshold.

SNAP eligibility is largely income based (i.e., \$14,160 annually for an individual, \$29,064 for a family of four), but varies based on age, SSI status and other factors. (see erie.gov for application information). Seven in ten respondents making under \$15,000 report receiving SNAP benefits, as do 37% earning \$15,000 to \$24,999 and 27% of those earning \$25,000 - \$34,999. However, significant numbers in these income brackets report relying on additional sources of assistance to afford food for their families (44%, 29% and 25%, respectively).

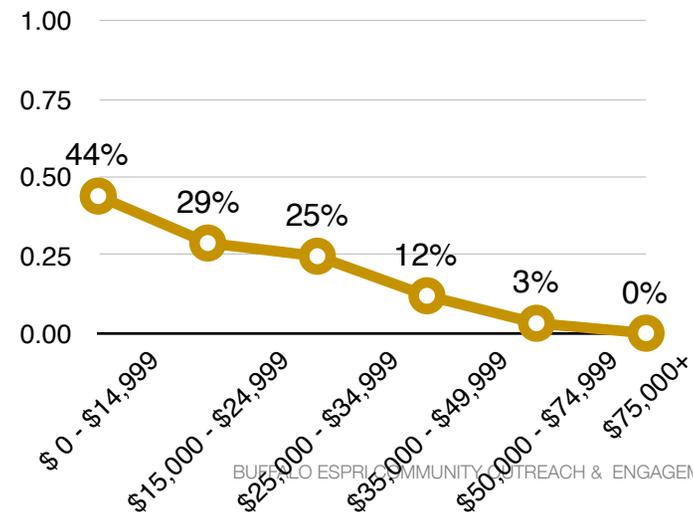
Percentage of Respondents who reported they are currently receiving assistance paying for food (SNAP benefits) per income level



Percentage of Respondents who reported they or someone in their household skipped meals because of an inability to afford food in the past year per income



Percentage of Respondents who reported they rely on other sources of assistance for food per income level

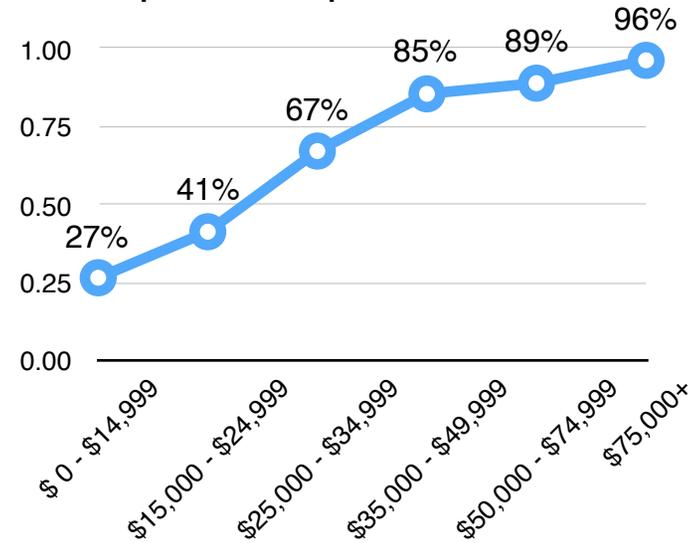


TRANSPORTATION

In naming barriers to work, respondents in households with incomes of \$0 - \$14,999 (26%), \$15,000-\$24,999 (33%) ranked transportation as a barrier to work more frequently than any other factor. From here transportation as a challenge became consistently lesser for progressively higher income bands, presenting a challenge, for instance, to only 1% of respondents with households earning more than \$75,000 annually.

Only 13% of those in households earning less than \$15,000 and 16% of those in households earning \$15,000 - \$24,999 reported using a personal car as their primary means of transportation. Between 35-40% of these respondents rely most frequently on public transit, a number that drops severely for higher income respondents.

Percentage of Respondents who have a motor vehicle available for personal use per income level



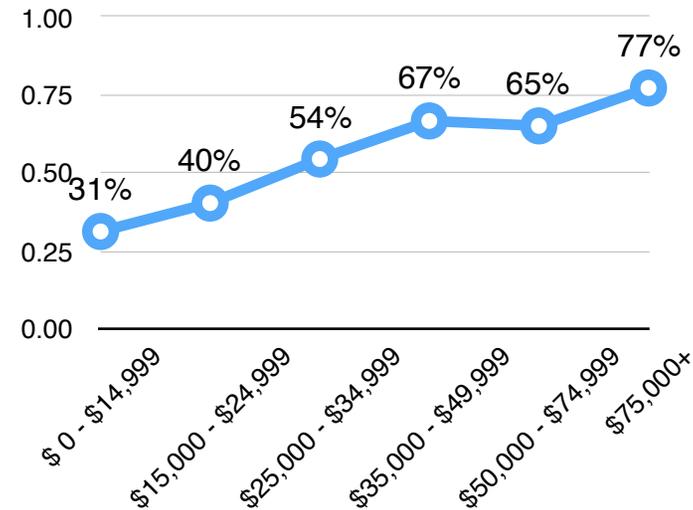
Primary Means of Transportation by Income Strata

	Bus or Metro Rail	Walking	Bicycle	Personal car / automobile	Car or ride sharing	Rides from friends / family	Taxi	Van service	Respondent Count
\$0 - \$14,999	36.7%	11.5%	4.0%	12.6%	9.0%	2.9%	0.4%	1.1%	278
\$15,000 - \$24,999	40.4%	6.7%	1.9%	16.4%	21.2%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	104
\$25,000 - \$34,999	14.9%	2.2%	1.5%	39.6%	26.1%	1.5%	0.8%	0.0%	134
\$35,000 - \$50,000	5.1%	0.9%	2.6%	53.0%	31.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	117
\$50,000 - \$74,999	3.2%	1.6%	1.6%	54.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	63
\$75,000 +	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%	67.1%	26.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	79
<i>did not answer income question</i>	33.3%	8.3%	2.8%	20.8%	12.5%	2.8%	0.0%	0.0%	72

32% of survey respondents from households earning less than \$25,000 annually reported that lack of transportation at some point prevented them from applying for, accepting or maintaining a job; however, this challenge drops to 4% for households making \$50,000+. This is in keeping with a low percentage of respondents in lower income brackets believing jobs and opportunities are easily accessible from their neighborhoods.

Beyond employment, 15% of respondents earning less than \$25,000 said a lack of transportation had prevented them from getting a child in their care to school (this challenge drops to 1% for households making \$50,000+), more than 30% have had trouble accessing a doctor, and almost 30% having difficulty accessing groceries and daily needs. These findings coincide with previous studies about an inequitable geography of opportunity in the region (see, for example, *The Racial Equity Dividend*).

Percentage of Respondents who believe jobs and other opportunities are easily accessible from their neighborhood per income level



Transportation Challenges by Income Strata: Percentage of respondents reporting transportation has prevented them from:

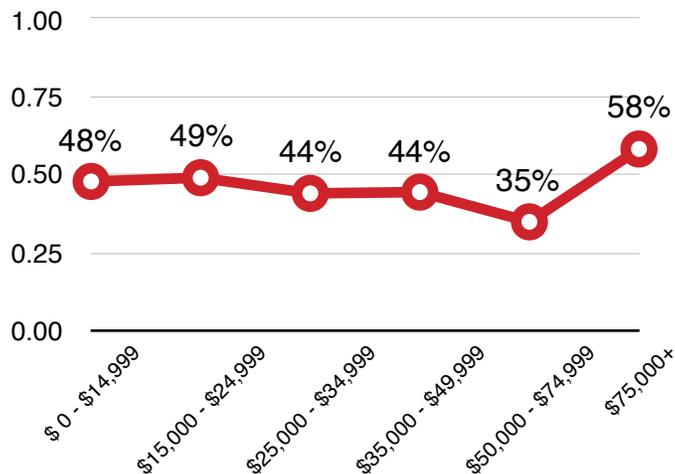
	Getting a child in your care to school	Attending a school meeting or event for a child in your care	Visiting a doctor	Applying for, accepting or maintaining a job	Purchasing groceries or other daily needs	Attending a community or religious event	Visiting family or friends	Renting or purchasing a home	None of these	Respondent Count
\$0 - \$14,999	14.8%	16.2%	37.1%	31.7%	27.0%	15.1%	25.2%	14.0%	28.1%	278
\$15,000 - \$24,999	18.3%	17.3%	30.8%	31.7%	30.8%	13.5%	23.1%	10.6%	33.7%	104
\$25,000 - \$34,999	11.2%	11.2%	14.9%	23.1%	17.9%	9.7%	22.4%	9.0%	50.0%	134
\$35,000 - \$50,000	11.1%	13.7%	16.2%	15.4%	16.2%	12.0%	16.2%	7.7%	56.4%	117
\$50,000 - \$74,999	1.6%	0.0%	3.2%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	4.8%	0.0%	81.0%	63
\$75,000 +	1.3%	5.1%	3.8%	6.3%	3.8%	1.3%	3.8%	0.0%	79.8%	79
<i>did not answer income question</i>	9.7%	8.3%	27.8%	19.4%	20.8%	9.7%	23.6%	9.7%	33.3%	72

CHILDREN & CHILDCARE

The percentage of respondents with children in their household dipped slightly between those making less than \$25,000 annually and those making \$25,000 to \$49,999, but those making \$75,000+ reported the highest portion of households with children.

Though the Census American Community Survey (ACS) reports that, regionally, 27% of households contain at least one person under the age of 18 (2015 5-Year Estimates), this survey included the possibility of adult children residing in respondents households, so the shown percentages are not comparable with ACS stats. 19% of respondents who reported having children in their household reported the presence of children over the age of 18. It was, again, the highest income bracket that reported the most frequent presence of children

Percentage of Respondents who reported have children in their household per income level

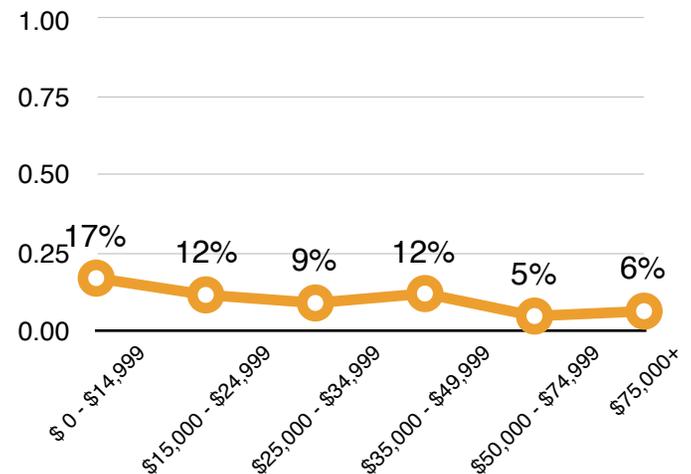


18-24 in their households, suggesting that children in these families may have an extended period of support before forming households of their own.

Though this highest income bracket had the highest percentage of households with children, the percentage of respondents reporting that a lack of childcare resulted in an inability to work or the loss of a job was significantly lower for respondents earning \$50,000 or more than it was in lower income brackets.

Percentage of all respondents reporting a child 18-24 years old in their household.	
\$0 - \$14,999	6.83%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	4.81%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	4.48%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	6.84%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	7.94%
\$75,000+	16.46%

Percentage of Respondents who reported turning down, quitting or being fired from a job because of not having regular childcare or being unable to afford childcare?

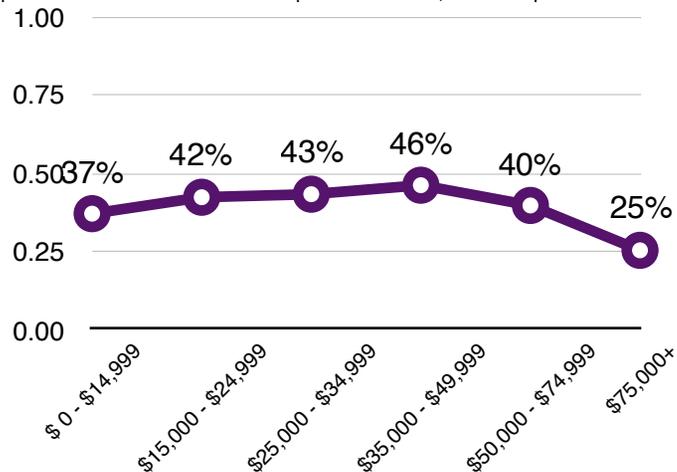


HEALTH & WELLNESS

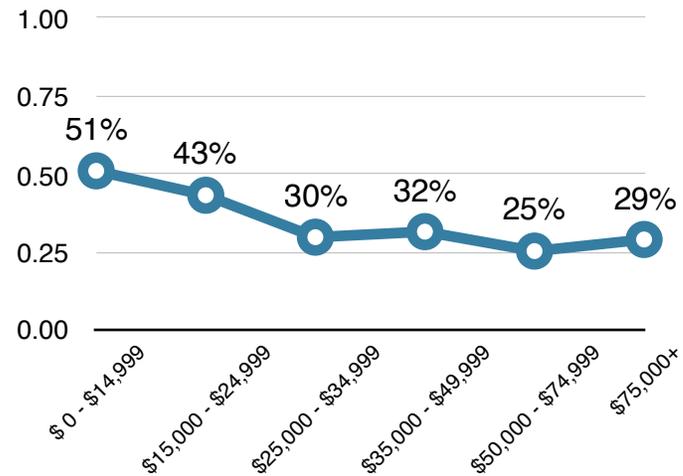
Survey responses suggested a link between health and income. More than half of respondents in households of less than \$15,000 reported either they or a household member had a chronic illness or disability. Nearly a third in this income bracket reported that they had lost a job or been unemployed because of a medical issue experienced by themselves or a family member. Though for those with incomes beyond \$25,000 presence of a disability or chronic illness in one's household was relatively consistent, those who reported suffering job and income setbacks because of medical issues consistently rose as incomes fell. In addition, at the highest income bracket, substantially fewer respondents reported work related challenges of visiting a doctor.

Percentage of Respondents who reported not going to a doctor because of the inability to miss work per income level*

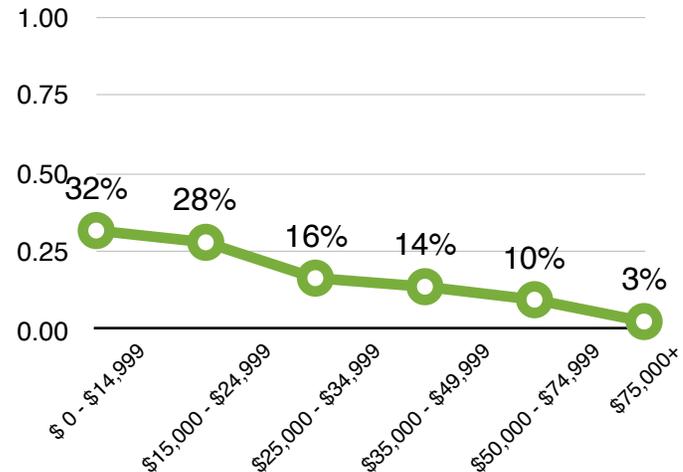
[* respondents answered either "in the past 12 months", or "in the past but not recently"]



Percentage of Respondents who reported themselves or a household member having a chronic illness or disability per income level



Percentage of Respondents who reported losing a job or being unemployed because of a medical issue suffered by themselves or a loved one per income level



Buffalo Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative

Community Outreach and Engagement

Community Forum Summary

Community Forums

Two community forums were held in early summer of 2017. The first, at PS 97 Harvey Austin Elementary School, occurred in conjunction with a community schools event for families on a Saturday morning. The second, at Lincoln Memorial Methodist Church, occurred in conjunction with a community street fair and festival.

To ascertain highest priority needs, the forums used human centered design and facilitation that was visible, respecting, participative, purposeful, and process orientated. The application of scenarios was a way to discuss challenging and sensitive topics while allowing for individuals to remain anonymous and protected from undesired self-disclosure. These scenarios included:

1. Housing & Financial Hardship
2. Child Care/ Transportation
3. Employment/ Jobs & Financial Hardship
4. Access to Food, Health & Wellness
5. Education & Teen Pregnancy

Participants were presented with a scenario that briefly outlined a set of challenges that an individual or a family faced within one of these topic areas. These scenarios (available below within the forum summaries) were nearly unanimously endorsed as realistic by the participants, who then were asked to name underlying challenges that led to the difficult situations and choices the hypothetical protagonists faced. The combined feedback from these forums suggested a number of overlapping challenges

contributed to the financial hardships the scenarios outlined.

Among these root causes cited were:

1. *The existing benefit structure does not create meaningful or accessible pathways to self-advancement.*
2. *A lack of jobs and employment opportunities face people in disinvested communities.*
3. *When employment is available, often the wages and benefits are not sufficient to sustain a family.*
4. *Barriers to education make it difficult to advance, and often educational systems are not set up to facilitate progress for individuals who do not fit conventional notions of a 'traditional' student.*
5. *Though resources exist with the community, often there is a disconnect that limits community members' knowledge about or connection to these resources.*
6. *Similar to the challenges faced within the benefit system, youth supports are either lacking or ill designed to ensure the success of younger populations.*
7. *Governmental priorities are seen as not lining up with the priorities and conditions of lower-income families and individuals. And government enforcement, particularly in the realm of housing, is seen as inadequate to improving conditions in disinvested communities.*

8. *Segregation and discrimination continue to be community issues, both in individual advancement and in access to jobs, necessities, and amenities.*
9. *Expensive housing and utilities are seen as a burden, and the specter of displacement caused by escalating housing prices is an increasing concern.*
10. *Sometimes known as the high cost of being poor, economic exploitation sets low-income families at a further disadvantage in paying more for goods and services.*
11. *In some communities a lack of awareness of individual rights, or a belief that those rights won't be enforced, means that community members continue to suffer injustices.*
12. *The burdens of financial hardship, including long working hours, long commute times, and inaccessible resources mean that people facing hardship are often lacking support and time for self care.*
13. *Safety and violence present barriers to community improvement and create long lasting challenges for families that are victims of crimes, or who have family members incarcerated.*
14. *Childcare is out of reach for many, both in location and in cost, meaning that childcare can often be incompatible with the economics and logistics of low-and mid-wage work.*

In addition, forum participants outlined a number of responses and changes that could be implemented to help alleviate financial hardship, most of them aimed at the systemic level.

Among these recommended systemic changes are:

1. *Changes to various benefit program changes, both to make them more accessible to those who qualify, as well as to provide a better transition for those who are improving their financial condition so that these residents can eventually achieve family sustaining wages without assistance.*
2. *Build community connections and cohesion so that there is greater understanding of the hardships communities are facing and that there is an enhanced support network to provide assistance to families in need.*
3. *For too many community members, one job has not been enough to advance out of poverty, better jobs with better wages need to be accessible to more people.*
4. *Examine and change economic models in low-income communities and communities of color, from community development initiatives to community controlled capital.*
5. *Connect people to services so community members are more aware of the resources and opportunities that are available to them.*

6. *More affordable housing needs to be available, both for rent and for purchase, particularly in light of increasing housing costs.*
7. *Childcare needs to be more accessible and affordable, with options for those working non-standard and irregular hours.*
8. *Transportation, particularly public transit, needs to better serve the needs of disinvested communities, with routes serving job centers and rides available and reliable outside of rush-hours.*
9. *Government investment needs to be determined with an equity based framework, ensuring that traditionally disinvested communities receive the attention they require.*

Though not necessarily systemic in a traditional sense, participants also saw a widespread need for providing support for those facing financial hardship, including:

10. *Provide, guidance, inspiration, and hope for those in need to help combat the persistent string of challenges, setbacks, and marginalization that too often come with financial hardship.*
11. *Amidst the multiple demands on low-income families and individuals, help people find coping and self care mechanisms.*

Community Forums Detail

As planned, the forums were to be run using small group break out sessions each revolving around a different topic area related to financial hardship. The ESPRI Community Conversations were to follow a set format and criteria as follows:

- Each group will receive a scenario to be used by the facilitator to spur discussion and draw information to be used to design strategies to reduce poverty.
- Each group will have a facilitator, a note taker and a digital recorder.
- Each table will have Easel Pad Paper, Markers and Post-it (sticky) Notes and Pens.
- The Conversations while recorded, will not be transcribed with any names. The identity of the participants will be protected.
- Each participant will be expected to be respecting of others, their view points and feelings.
- The group sessions will be timed and the time limits must be respected.

Due to the nature of the additional activities and number of attendees taking place at each of the forums, however, the execution of the events needed to be modified to fit the situation. What follows is a synopsis of the feedback received from the forums as run.

**COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS ON FINANCIAL
HARDSHIP**

Community Forum and Focus Group

HARVEY AUSTIN SCHOOL

1405 Sycamore Street, Buffalo, New York 14211

June 3, 2017

9:00 a.m. – 11:00a.m.

A limited number of participants at this forum led to a change in the structure of the feedback session. The various topic scenarios were set up workshop style, with several conversations happening concurrently.

These conversations ranged from one-on-one to small group conversations regarding the various financial hardship scenarios. Each session is summarized in the pages that follow. Because of the differences in conversation format and facilitator note taking styles, each conversation's notes follow a differing style and format.

Each, however, attempted to answer the same three primary questions:

- 1) *How realistic is this scenario?*
- 2) *What do you think are some of the underlying problems or reasons why this may occur to people in the community?*
- 3) *What changes do you think should be in place to help this family (or individual) overcome their hardship?*

Harvey Austin Community Forum Synopsis

Employment/ Job Financial Hardship

- This group was run twice. Responses from each session are catalogued separately below.

Scenario:

A thirty-five-year-old lifelong City of Buffalo resident was in the US Air Force for 6 years and received an honorable discharge. He enrolled in various college programs during his term in the military and has about three years of college credits. He was recently hired as a civil servant after almost seven years of holding two and three part-time jobs to make ends meet because he could never obtain a full-time job during those seven years.

Even though he's happy he has a new full-time job, he is behind in the electric bill, gas bill, student loans, child care, and rent. He is constantly paying bills based on what is most urgent on the pay week.

This week, the gas company disconnected his service and he has no hot water or use of his stove. He went down to the gas company to make arrangements to pay his bill and was told he needs a deposit of \$437.00 plus a reconnection fee of \$162.47 to reconnect the service. He does not have the money.

Group 1

Question 1.

How realistic is this scenario (extremely realistic/somewhat realistic/not realistic at all)?

Very realistic!

Question 2.

What do you think are some of the underlying problems or reasons why this may occur to people in the community?

- taxes too high and then money doesn't make it to where it is needed
 - (i.e., Canal Side vs. Inner City)
 - (road repairs never make it to inner city)
 - cut school programs
 - politicians take \$
- violence makes everyone fearful to go to certain areas
- need to invest in our kids
- jobs — where are they at?
 - apply, never hear back
 - when you call, no answer
- PT jobs — need 3 to make ends meet
- childcare costs high, and fear not safe
- minimum wage went up; yet taxes did too; lowering the end result to help

Question 3.

What changes do you think should be in place to help this family overcome their hardship?

- help each other (build trust)
 - childcare, fixing things with each other
 - unity programs
- *-transportation look at where buses go
 - many areas cut can't get to jobs
- improve all areas of city prioritize the worst
 - (bad road, increase repair costs occurring in areas can least afford)
- daycare
 - need help paying
 - and need them to be safe
- * - unity/ community program
 - partnering to reduce violence
 - increase trust
- * - know your neighbors; help each other

Harvey Austin Community Forum Synopsis

Employment/ Job Financial Hardship (cont.)

Group 2

Question 1.

How realistic is this scenario (extremely realistic/somewhat realistic/not realistic at all)?

Very realistic – happens every day

Question 2.

What do you think are some of the underlying problems or reasons why this may occur to people in the community?

- much more needed out of pocket than can bring in
- there is an order to pay bills but it is difficult to keep up
- long gap employment especially for Full Time jobs are offered in house leaving the undesirable ones to the public
- Part-time/ per diem don't give benefits
- when you don't have the money, difficult to present yourself as a professional can't afford clothes / make up, etc.
- many do not know how to interview
- SS department issues
 - they say are law (like must go to program during day during specific hours vs. schools to better self) should value betterment – “XX?XX/ education not required”
- childcare not available
- devalued to be on welfare

Question 3.

What changes do you think should be in place to help this family overcome their hardship?

- * - childcare to better self toward changing and assistance your financial situation like education
- * - add requirements that make sense and are achievable for assistance
 - better level of help to improve outcomes
 - example: daycare/ financial assistance/ transportation with education to get job and begin road to betterment
- utility programs beyond HEAP
 - HEAP help only if shut off – need help before.
 - sometimes you'll let shut off happen because then you can get help
- require benefits with all jobs
 - Part-time secure because Full Time = benefits
- * - childcare + assistance for 2 years when working to get off welfare
 - often job choice not taken you can end up in worse financial situation

Harvey Austin Community Forum Synopsis

Education and Teen Pregnancy

Scenario: A high-school junior and senior are both 18 years old and are expecting their child to be born in two months. The mother, a senior, has been told by her mother that she can no longer stay in the family home and that she must find a place to live, even though the young mother will graduate from high school in about three months. The father, a junior, has very good grades, and is well liked by his teachers. He asked his mother if his girlfriend and new baby could move into their home, but his mom refused. The father, who currently works part-time, has been offered a full-time position by his boss because of his excellent work ethic. The father previously turned down these offers because he wanted to pursue his education to become a lawyer. Now, the young man thinks that if he could work full time, it would allow for him to rent a small place for him and his new family.

Both young parents agree that they are unable to afford day-care, and do not want to leave the raising of their child, in the hands of strangers. Both parents know that they stand a better chance of providing for their child if they complete their education and attend college, but right now the most important thing is to make money and find a place to live. The young parents decide to drop out of school to raise their child together, as a family. Both agree that once they are settled and their child was ready for school, they would focus on continuing their education.

Question 1.

How realistic is this scenario?

Extremely Realistic	Somewhat Realistic	Not Realistic at All
3	0	0

Question 2.

What do you think are some of the underlying problems or reasons why this may occur to people in the community?

respondent 1

- Lack of Education
- Lack of Vocational Training
- Need for self education

respondent 2

- Parents are tired, don't wanna raise grandkids
- Why can't school help the children?

respondent 3

- Lack of knowledge & resources
- It's some services available to help and it's some workers available if you have the right person

Harvey Austin Community Forum Synopsis

Education and Teen Pregnancy (cont.)

Question 3.

What changes do you think should be in place to help this family overcome their hardship?

Most

5 Family Support Schools with Daycare
Daycare in school should be offered for
students that have children

4 Better Paying Jobs

3 Schools that help lower rent
Affordable housing opportunities for teen
pregnancy/ teen parents

2

1 Employers should work
around school schedules

Least

Harvey Austin Community Forum Synopsis

Access to Food, Health & Wellness

Scenario: This family receives SNAP benefits. Mom works two part-time jobs to support herself and her three children under the age of 10.

She knows she should be more concerned with her health and the health of her children, but is unable to provide healthy food throughout each month. Every month she gets SNAP benefits for her family and about 2 and ½ weeks into the month she makes her rounds to the local food pantries to try to make her groceries stretch. Often the options at the pantries are carbohydrates and highly processed foods which contain high amounts of sodium and sugars. After a recent doctor visit, she was diagnosed with high blood pressure. The doctor said she needs to take medication, reduce her intake of salt, and get more exercise.

Yesterday, she was offered the opportunity to go to a full-time position and must decide this weekend whether she will take it. While the full-time job will allow her to be home nights and weekends with her children, she will no longer be eligible for the SNAP benefits. The increase in pay does not appear to be sufficient to allow her to be able to afford food monthly for her family. She may have to continue to go to the food pantry to supplement her family's monthly groceries. She is not sure as to what to do.

Responses from a mother of 3: "...one of my children attends Harvey Austin, since the Saturday Academy began and I have been more involved in my daughter's school life she has improved in school."

Question 1.

How realistic is this scenario?
Scenario Extremely Realistic

Question 2.

What do you think are some of the underlying problems or reasons why this may occur to people in the community?

*[Categories with an * were prioritized by respondent]*

Question 3.

What changes do you think should be in place to help this family overcome their hardship?

1st

Expensive Bills

***Cut back on using so much electricity heat
Eliminate what is not needed**

Lack of Knowledge of Resources

Stress

*** Pray**

**find someone you can trust to talk/vent to
take a walk/ exercise
distractions**

Harvey Austin Community Forum Synopsis

Access to Food, Health & Wellness (cont.)

More monies spent on Food

2nd

Lack Support

* ask for help

*People in Charge of Benefits don't understand daily struggles

* couponing
sales

find as many resources as possible such as
vouchers, WIC, and etc

cut back on eating out/ buying food + prepare it
yourself (meal prep)

3rd

She doesn't have time to care for herself

Income guidelines based on gross and not net (take home)

* Access to healthy foods

**COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS ON FINANCIAL
HARDSHIP**

**Community Forum and Focus Group
LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
641 Masten Avenue, Buffalo, New York 14209
June 24, 2017
10:00 a.m. – 11:30a.m.**

For this forum, the assembled participants (approximately 15 at any one time) participated in each of the scenarios as a full group. What follows is a full transcription of the conversation. Names of session facilitators are included, however names of session participants are redacted.

RHR: Introduction and Agenda for the day

- Scenarios will be read aloud to all in room and will ask three (3) questions.

Education and Teen Pregnancy

Facilitator TB: reads scenario:

A high school junior and a senior are both 18 years old and are expecting their child to be born in two months. The mother, a senior, had been told by her mother that she can no longer stay in the family home and that she must find a place to live, even though the young mother will graduate from high school in about three months. The father, a junior, has very good grades, and is well liked by his teachers. He asked his mother if his girlfriend and new baby could move into their home, but his mom refused. The father, who currently works part-time, had been offered a full time position by his boss because of his excellent work ethic. The father previously turned down these offers because he wanted to pursue his education to become a lawyer. Now, the young man thinks that if he could work full time, it would allow for him to rent a small place for him and his new family.

Both young parents agree that they are unable to afford day-care, and do not want to leave the raising of their child, in the hands of strangers, both parents know that they stand a better chance of providing for their child if they complete their education and attend college, but right now the most important thing is to make money and find a place to live. The young parents decide to drop out of school to raise their child together, as a family. Both agree that once they are settled and their child was ready for school, they would focus on continuing their education.

How realistic is this scenario?

7 hold up 5 for realistic, 1 holds up a 0 for not realistic

Young Man1 (held up the 0):

Maybe only one of parents should drop out, and the other should stay in school to be able to get a higher paying job.

TB: Can I just say that you are closer to the age were talking about, I am sure.

YM1: Right.

RHR: My question is, I agree with you in that maybe that should be the case but is this a scenario you are seeing occur.

YM1: No.

RHR: You're not; you're seeing only one person drop out in this scenario.

YM1: Yes.

What are some of the underlying problems or reasons this may occur to people in the community?

WM1: Is the school providing sex education to the community?

RHR: So we are not going to make any assumptions that anything is there.

Not making any assumptions.

WM1: Are the parents providing education? In the 70s, my parents talked about sex. You know, when, where, how. We didn't get it on YouTube. We had a conversation okay. A conversation.

WM2:

Birth control. Even if kids say, they are not having sex. "You are in my household, let's try this and keep moving forward".

RHH:

What about the education part of it? What about, what could the schools do? If you're pregnant, then what? Should you have to leave?

WM1:

I think the school should make every attempt to keep a young person in school. So work with social services. I have been here for ten years and the challenge is we have a wealth of resources from every agency that you could think of but they are all disconnected. If we could integrate those programs, it would benefit us all. Health ed, teach, counselors, need to be talking, parents, social services, pastor, etc. It takes a village. It takes a village to keep these kids in school.

DCM:

We need to be able to provide supports for the mother and that child. Many years ago in Buffalo there used to be a school for girls who were

pregnant and were giving birth. They provided child care at several key schools in the area as well as nurses and clinics because we know there is stigma as a pregnant girl, and then no one else around is able to relate to your situation. It is difficult to be different in a situation where now you are thinking differently before you were having a baby as well. I think we need to consider bringing back a solution like that for young women. Maybe we should consider opening it up to girls not only in the city of Buffalo but girls throughout Erie County that are getting pregnant. Unfortunately, I don't know what kinds of resources the school districts in the area have but it seems to be resistance to providing support, and I just don't know why.

WM1:

And Doris to your point, I'm all for the girl thing, but need to be open to boys too. Right now, my nephew is 23, and I think this needs to be open to gentleman too. No, they don't carry it, but in his case, he came home with a baby. She went over, she was going and he came home with baby.

WM3:

Also, they need to know where the resources are. That's one difficult part of the whole scenario, is they don't know where the resources are. And I don't know what it is about our community, but it's not open up to us. A pregnant mother and father need to know where the resources are and I think that is one of the big problems.

DCM:

These kids will not qualify for assistance because they are not 18 and above so in this situation we are talking about two young people that are homeless. So why shouldn't they qualify for housing? Didn't we just pass a law that makes it illegal for people to get married if they are under the age of 16? So if you can vote you should be able to qualify for housing at least when you turn 18.

WM4:

Various schools, like international prep, we build a resource room. This scenario is unrealistic to me. We see all single mothers, do not have father present. See a lack of presence of parents not being involved like they should be. No pressure on them, but pressure on the school system, teachers, etc. I would not kick my children out of the house; to me it's something you have to deal with. To me there should be a law made, mediation somewhere, should not be able to kick kids out of the house. Where is a 15 year old going to go? There is a reason they are in the streets. Services are all disconnected. Restricted by where you live. If you need help you should be able to go somewhere where they can help you.

TB:

These are two teens interested in raising their child together as a family. When you have that situation, we should be holding that and working

with that, loving the opportunity. The women too often bear the brunt, 'I'll drop out', etc. then they end up further behind.

WM5:

With kids trying to make this work, if they do not have support. They leave school because of the lack of support from the school or they are too ashamed to be there. The father is just as lost as the mother is. I know a younger couple that is trying to stay together, almost like they are forced to be together, although they made that baby themselves but they do not have those supports, so they become angry. They do not see the resources right across the street from them. Don't have confidence to trust the resources that are available.

What changes should be in place to help this family overcome their hardships

RHR:

Faith community I think that traditionally as a faith community has often pulled our arms around families in distress, and so along with government I think that there is a roll the faith community can play in supporting young people trying to make good decisions when problems arise.

DCM:

I remember I actually grew up in Brooklyn, New York and my school was very experimental and very progressive. We were one of the first schools

in the city New York that mainstreamed disabled students into our student body so it was really common to see individuals with wheelchairs and other disabilities. Maybe we would want to consider bringing in our teens into some of our specialty schools because if it's too expensive to run an institution specially just for them just for them why don't we consider integrating them into some of the programs we have within the Buffalo public schools and be able to have all of the supports there for them as well.

WM4:

Doris I think that it would not be a challenge to integrate some of the services into the public schools. I mean we are already out here. United Way is already out here so they can have a spot and maybe come on Tuesday or Thursday. Red Cross, I'm just naming a few agencies, the Whitman project, teen pregnancy prevention services, whatever can support and be able to help these families should somehow be integrated into that school. We should see if we could integrate some of the services that already exist.

WM5:

I don't work for the Buffalo Public Schools but I do know that they are trying to integrate or to come up with a new model, which has some of the resources that you are talking about. Community organizations are coming to the schools on certain days to say hey so it might be an opportunity for the community to understand -- and I know that

they are working on a mobile vaccination unit with some preventive services in it so

In times past, I don't know because I was not educated here but in times passed there were schools specifically for educating unwed mothers. What resources can be in place or should be in place to help these young couples in their new life as parents and also in helping, them to continue their education to not throw that away? Right now in several Buffalo Public Schools is a United Way program called the Gap Program. This works at removing some of the barriers to learning for students. Currently, I don't know what they do in the area of health and wellness but at this point something like teaching a young mom how to be a mom, or making sure that they are making their doctors' appointments and doing those types of things. Helping a young man understand finance so whatever job he gets he understands how to sustain his family. It seems to me that one way we can help these young people is by giving them something to look at that would point them in the direction of services that are already available in the community.

DCM: So some sort of public service campaign.

RHR:

And also, some measuring case management especially when they already are overwhelmed. That's what I was saying in the faith community. Some other groups that will help you where you

are and connect people with organizations that will help.

And also, to be able to see what the future is. I also used to work at Buffalo State and right in Buffalo they have what they call family college and that means that you can live on campus. It's the only way that undergraduates can live and go to school. If they understand to what the future has because it's not just about the present. They believe, that they don't have a future because their present is so annoying. You can go to college as a family with your baby. There is a daycare right on campus that will give power and opportunity for the youth to say oh my goodness I can do it.

RHR:

So what I really hear all of you saying is that we need to have some kind of public campaign that advises them directs them or points them to the services that they need to help them, because people don't know what they don't know.

TB:

Hi everyone. I just want to say that we do have time to move on to the next one but I am going to hold off. Everything that you guys were talking about of getting the community involved is where we are right now. You would be amazed that there are over 40 organizations in the community working together, now it's just about getting that information out there. Thank You.

Housing & Financial Hardship

Facilitator RS reads scenario:

A family moved into a new home 10 months ago, that was safer, cleaner and in better condition than their previous home. The home they left had rats, broken faucets and a ceiling that leaked. A number of electric sockets did not work and the house was cold all the time, despite the fact that the heat bills were always very high. The street they lived on had many homes in disrepair and the children were only allowed outside onto the porch to keep them safe. The landlord was always slow to make repairs and would show up unannounced to fix things on his own.

The rent in the new home is \$850.00 for a three bedroom, \$350.00 more than the old rent. The father got a second job to be able to make rent. The second job had limited hours and was not bringing in enough money to pay the bills. Business was slow and the father was often sent home without being able to complete a shift. This disrupted his plan to make extra money to pay the increased rent and the rest of the household expenses, such as, food, gas & electric, car payment and car insurance. The car note and car insurance is required because it allows the father to get to his full-time job in the suburbs.

To be able to pay all the bills, the father has been paying half the rent on the 1st of the month and the other half on the 15th, but has fallen behind one month in rent. The landlord is demanding the back rent (arrears) be paid in full along with the rent due for the month, for a total of \$1700.00, or he will start the eviction process. The only way to come up with the full amount is to skip the car payment and part of the car insurance and gas bill.

How realistic?

Enthusiastic 5s from everyone.

What are underlying problems or reasons this may occur to people in the community?

YM1: Education

WM1:

No training. No jobs in the community. Education. Need one good job to take care of his family. 2 jobs is killing yourself.

WM2:

Code enforcement/ inspectors. City needs to be able to step in and get these landlords to do the work, bring down bills, etc.

RS:

Do people have a greater tendency to live with broken stuff in house if renting, or try to fix it themselves and keep it moving?

WM1:

Level of pride. Not going to go to the landlord to fix things if he's behind on rent. So I think there is some level of pride there. He is trying to do the right thing in this scenario but he's working two jobs he doesn't have time.

RHR:

Could afford first rent, but not energy costs. Landlord wouldn't fix properly. Question was, did

the father try to fix it himself, or would they try to fix it themselves. What is the realistic scenario?

WM5:

A lot of tenants won't fix it themselves even if they can fix it. Tenants remind them "This is not my house" and I have to remind them this is your house you need to take care of it. Need to fix it and give the landlord receipts and take it out of the rent. Tenants have rights but they don't realize that. It is the tenant's responsibility sometimes. They live in that broken mess. They allow it they move into it.

WM6: It's the landlord's job. I pay the rent, they should fix it.

WM4:

Our neighborhoods are being gentrified, if you have limited funds and you find a place that's feasible for your income, you're going to move there even if there are problems. There are resources out there; HOME; etc. need to know that the resources are there. People don't know to go to social services to help. We need a hub to get this information out to the community. You have to make the landlord accountable even though I live there it's my house I'm paying you to live in a safe environment and if you do not provide that environment I can take legal action. But a lot of people don't know about that legal action, but a lot of people don't know about that legal action. We need more resources to be readily available to

the community.

Rev. M.:

I'd be happy to fix the apt, file a complaint etc., just as soon as I have the time in between jobs, raising kids, etc. Too often, we blame the victim. To get a second job shows he understands his responsibilities. The fact that we allow slumlords to thrive in this community, is not an individual circumstance or an individual answer. This is about our being together as a community and making those kinds of circumstances untenable and unwelcome. As a boy, we used to wrap our arms around people when they moved into our community until they are whole as a community we need to make sure we care about our neighbors next door to us and knock on the door and say hello and if I can help you in any way please let me know. This happens every day in our community. People are so busy treading water, they don't have time to send out distress signals that we might respond to.

RHR:

Often enough landlords have in lease agreement that tenants are to make no improvements/alterations without expressed permission. So that's a barrier even if you are inclined and do have the means to fix it. The other part of it as well is that everything costs money. You are on a strict budget and a boiler breaks, you are not making that repair. Everything is either \$100 or \$1000 and never in between. \$100 can feel like \$1000 when

you have \$.15.that's another piece of the dynamic.

TB:

Even if you know your rights, here is a power dynamic as a tenant and a landlord that is real. The legal system isn't always for us. That it will be expensive time consuming, and so that's a barrier too.

WM6:

Real quick tenants need to be accountable when they move in. If the landlord is saying this will all be fixed when you move in. If the tenant moves in in that condition, it sends a signal that the tenant will be lenient with conditions.

DCM: Often you need to be in at a certain date...

RHR: You're going to be homeless otherwise.

DCM:

We've seen people moving with made up carts and shopping carts, etc. Time is stressful part of moving into an apartment and you need to put a roof over your head.

RHR: Do you think this gentlemen put himself in a bad situation by moving into a place he knew he cannot afford?

MP: Two things popped into my mind:
- he has a full time job

- he has to get a second job

For me, personally, what that comes down to a livable wage. People have certain expenses that they know they have to make a weekly basis or bimonthly basis-facilities and insurance. When you factor all that needs to be afforded, there is no expendable income. What rights do we have? Health care? Safe living environment? How can you have these without a livable wage?

PN:

There is no price on safer, cleaner. there's no price on that. That is a choice you're going to make for your family.

RHR:

We should not permit – something about slumlords should be banished. We have lists and lists of slumlords that we know are perpetuating this problem and something must be done. Something needs to be done about that.

What changes should be in place...

S:

There is a middle ground, where as a community when can come together. We do need to go after extremes of the landlords who are not fixing things and the tenants who are breaking things on purpose.

PN:

One of the problems is we need to drill down on definitions. What do you mean by community? What do you mean by come together? There are systemic issues, and people who are exploiting people. We give people a pass too easily. "let's sit down and talk to them". No. Let's stop them from doing what they are doing. We need to be specific about our definitions, when we talk about words that can be very broad. I can guarantee the people owning this house down have a sense of community with the people they are renting to.

RHR: Solutions we've heard: livable wages; public safety; accountability; community knowledge of resources

WM7: That's the problem; can't qualify for resources if working/ earning too much.

DCM:

We know that as the cycle will continue. There will be other bills that are not paid unless someone loans him money.

PN:

We know that prices for food is higher in some areas. Utility costs are different in different communities. Insurance payments, car notes higher. Hidden taxes add to the burden of this man's situation. Paying more by virtue of his condition, that is a systemic problem, grounded in a lot of race and class issues.

RHR:

Does the family need education in handling a budget? We don't know what other expenses may have contributed. Does that help them just a little further down the road.

Employment and Financial Hardship ~14 participants

Facilitator MP reads scenario:

A thirty-five-year-old lifelong City of Buffalo resident was in the US Air Force for 6 Years And received an honorable discharge. He enrolled in various college programs during his term in the military and had about three years of college credits. He was recently hired as a civil servant after almost seven years of holding two and three part-time jobs to make ends meet because he could never obtain a full-time job during those seven years.

Even though he's happy he has a new full-time job, he is behind in the electric bill, gas bill, student loans, childcare and rent. He is consistently paying bills based on what is the most urgent on the pay week.

This week the gas company disconnected his service and he has no hot water or use of his stove he went down to the gas company to make arrangements to pay his bill and was told he needs a deposit of \$437.00 plus a reconnection fee of \$162.47 to reconnect the service. He does not have the money.

How realistic is this scenario?

Realistic; 5s all around; a couple do not raise hands.

What are underlying problems?

RHR:

It took far too long to get a job. It took seven years, what's going on there? He is a vet, who would someone who served our country not being able to find a job?

M1:

Well sometimes if they don't network the right way, I am a vet, went through this scenario in 1992. It's easier to find a temp job then it is to find a regular one. Had I known how to network, it would have been much easier. Lack of knowledge, lack of networking. Much easier to get a PT job or temp job.

TB: How does the military preparation translate to a civilian job?

M1:

Great question. Biggest asset we have is that we are leaders. Focus on discipline and leadership alone. Have management experience. If I have gone to Albany, Atlanta, California could have been making \$80,000 a year, but I came back to Buffalo. Looking for leadership positions because you have management skills.

DCM:

Come back to systemic issues. Vets have the job training/ experience and get through all the screening. Have employable skills, but barriers to success and full time jobs. Employers have to be willing to hire individuals in this scenario. There are systemic barriers that are preventing this individual from holding a full time job.

Rev. M:

If a young person is in service to this country, there shouldn't need to be student loans. There

are some systemic issues in the service that allowed this man to require student loans.

RHR:

Agree that networking is really important, but that is not always the answer either. It shouldn't necessarily be that hard. Should be some systems in place that get counseling and support that only vets should get. i.e., networking, you've been in a whole different system. For people of color, the job/ professional networks are not there. Our networks don't necessarily lead to a job. When you are working a job, it is difficult to find a job. We tend to have impoverished communities that don't allow us to network to find a job.

WM8:

There were community organizations he could have reached out to, but he did not reach out to. We have a lot of programs in this city that people don't know about. You can get help in this city. How do we make people know exactly where to go. My granddaughter's husband came out of the military. When he came back from Afghanistan, he had serious problems. They already had one child. We took him where he needed to go to get help, but it was a lot of work for the family and someone needed to find that support. You gotta do what you need to do to make sure that family member can function. They don't make it out of this scenario without hands there to help. Unfortunately, we have a lack of those networks. And if those networks aren't there, they may not

be functioning.

M1:

We have a lack of education in our community, when men go into combat action, they do not go back the same. What happens is when I came back I was used to having a mission and a purpose. The first thing they told me was that I was entitled to unemployment. Take that time and get yourself together, find out what you want to. In our community, when the stressors pile up, the PTSD can manifest in drugs, alcoholism, domestic violence, you name it anything can happen. Important that we as a community, especially our community or every community, make sure we cover returning vets, has to be a straight run to how they can have a smooth transition. we have to make sure that we come together and cover them. There needs to be a straight line to how you transition. Don't know what to expect when you go from military to civilian, it's the hardest thing in the world. . Everything is setup, always have responsibility. Now have to fight for a job. I'm trying to get around and get this information out there. There are people who are vets hustling on the corner. There are a lot of programs, but there is lack of education. there is lack of education in our church and the church is the beacon of hope in the community.

WM8:

When vets are being discharged, they need to be given information package wherever they are

going, and we need to start seeing that this is part of the process. These are the things that are available to you immediately. The one stop to all of the available programs.

M1:

United Way, everything that you say is important but I was thinking maybe we could create a plan to strategically catch these veterans when they come back and bring them directly to you. Need to devise a plan to not fall into these situations. If the conversation never comes up we can never talk about these things, it's hush hush. Talking about financial concepts and financial information, we make money but then spend it. It's a lot of systematic mis-education.

TB:

There is also support for military families even before people return from service. Especially for families and children. To help make the transition easier.

What are changes that we need to see?

RHR:

One of the solutions was the packet for people coming home from the military, so they would have some sort of idea for things they can do to find a job. Things they need and things their family needs.

MP: Resources seem to be a common theme:

1) there are lots out there

2) where and how do we get information to people/ how do we connect with the people in our work (apprenticeship program), don't know how to use GI bill.

RHR:

Information, counseling, etc.; how do we get to a place of employment. We talked about all of the resources that are out there but people just don't know how to get to them. Someone said 211, is it friendly, and is it enough that needs to be looked at.

M1:

Also, pride. Example HEAP program, if you are making \$50k, you are still able to go down and get some help with your utilities. But you have to show that you're 'weak'. When I talk to people about it, they say no, because they don't want to go and now show that they are weak. I think a big thing is lack of knowledge. If you don't have the knowledge or the know-how and lack of planning, whether you're military or not military. The counselors are overworked over manned over everything, so they can't plan for you your own life. Maybe you want to go to college but you are the first on in your family, what do you anticipate. I'm the first one to go to college in my family and it was tough. I took a ton of classes that I should have, but I learned from experience.

RER: So mentoring.

M1:

Yes. And when you're new, starting out, people who don't know/ don't trust you won't give you the support. What you are doing today, I'm excited because we're talking about all the things that are impacting our lives. here is my question to you all, I'm looking at finances: How many people have a savings account. What is that interest rate? But look at the interest that banks are getting on mortgage. And we wonder why our debt is piling up. Look at how that money can support our communities. Really, education is the key to everything.

RHR: Thank you all for coming and for giving us your time and attention.

Buffalo Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative

Community Outreach and Engagement

Pop Up Placards Summary

Pop Up Placards

Festival goers at Juneteenth and the Massachusetts Avenue Community Concert, in addition to participants in the Lincoln Memorial Baptist Church Forum, were asked to fill out placards with their ideas for creating financial well being for community members.

This outreach method allowed for the beginning of real time conversations and helped to expand the dialogue on financial hardship and well-being — as well as awareness of the ESPRI initiative — with additional participants and passers by.

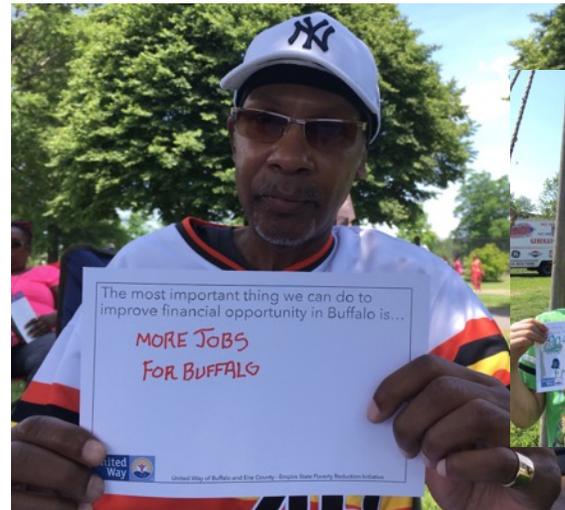
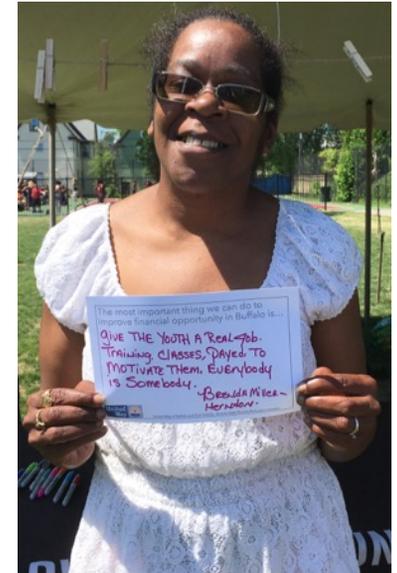
People were asked to complete a single statement:

The most important thing we can do to improve financial opportunity in Buffalo is...

Forty four people filled out the placards, and some placards had multiple ideas or suggestions. Much of the feedback followed similar themes to the forums and the survey. In number of instances, the need for more jobs rose to the fore, and education, better wages, community capital and addressing racism and segregation also surfaced regularly:



Jobs	13
Education Access/ Reform	7
Better Wages	6
Community Capital	6
Equity/ Ending Racism	3
Entrepreneurship	2
Neighborhood Investment	2
Police Reform	2
Youth Supports	2
Affordable Housing	1
Apprenticeships	1
Arts	1
Community Safety	1
Financial Education	1
Health	1
Outreach & Awareness	1



The following represent the full text of each of the 44 community completed placards.

The most important thing we can do to improve financial opportunity in Buffalo is...

create sustainable employment	more jobs for Buffalo	In the African American Community we need to establish a community development fund to invest in housing, business development.	- inclusionary zoning - hire local skilled and unskilled labor - developers use only contractors for projects
Education on how to: - get jobs - go back to school - programs that assist the poorer neighborhoods - educate younger parents at an early age & stage in parenting - state/ federal grants	provide more jobs.	worker owned cooperatives, community banking, increased access to small loans, strong regulation and reinvestment.	expand opportunities in the arts to make a more vibrant community....
employment training for jobs	more field trips in school. helping our schools.	you have to help the less opportunity people by helping housing, auto, financing with low interest	Teach people to create their own opportunities and empower themselves
Give people more jobs, and get them off the streets.	Zoo field trips. Selling games.	community itself intrinsic to development decisions! (active participation in process)	end capitalism
have more jobs.	Free tuition for everyone no matter what	end systemic racism like 100 years ago!	Educate our children early in particular with training in finances and credit. Early banking programs in school etc Start in school programs.
hire more disabled people	-Clean Streets -Better Schools	to make equity a way of life!!	Health is always a problem in Buffalo, people are having a hard time trying to afford health care for themselves or their family and its hard to try and get through it. Plus it is a struggle out there.

Job	- raise minimum wage - better public ed. - social enterprise	push small businesses!!	bring awareness that there are opportunities out there for people. More outreach!!
JOBS, JOBS, JOBS!!!	Better Paying Jobs!	Take \$ from BPD budget & put it into community resources and jobs.	everything is alright, just need more people.
Jobs.	Create laws around a livable wage, affordable education, affordable healthcare, food access and how society perceives/ treats those in financial hardship.	Task \$ from BPD budget & put it into Job & Comm.	stop the violence!
More Jobs	implement a \$15.00/hr minimum wage	give the youth a real jobs. Training, classes, payed, to motivate them. Everybody is somebody.	
More Jobs Better Housing Children's Programs	introduce a universal minimum basic income, provide socialized basic benefits for all, and a maximum capped wage. And address systemic racism & bigotry.	apprenticeships!	

Appendix A: Precedent Report Summaries

The Racial Equity Dividend: Buffalo's Great Opportunity

The Racial Equity Dividend: Buffalo's Great Opportunity reveals the tremendous benefits that will accrue to our region when we achieve racial equity. The report outlines a host of systemic factors that have created racial disparities in the region. Because of a web of governmental and private sector policies and practices dating back well into Buffalo's industrial peak, people in the region face differential access to opportunity. In our neighborhoods, in our education and employment opportunities, in our income and wealth and within criminal justice and community safety, people of color are facing outcomes that do not reflect our community's true potential and opportunity for prosperity.

The Racial Equity Dividend examines how racial equity is good for everyone. With racial equity, the entire region will benefit from increased opportunity, a more robust regional economy and greater investment in its communities. Eliminating racial equity gaps in education and job readiness would create over \$1 billion in increased regional GDP annually. Eliminating racial equity gaps in criminal justice would mean nearly 54,000 individuals with reduced barriers and enhanced access to workforce participation over the next decade. Eliminating racial equity gaps in the region's neighborhoods would mean more than 36,000 additional families purchasing a home. And eliminating racial equity gaps in income and wealth would mean an additional \$12 billion in wealth for area families.

However, much work needs to be done in order to eliminate these gaps and improve outcomes for everyone. A legacy of segregation means the region's population is disconnected, and children today are not fully experiencing the cultural and social difference in our region which will be increasingly important in a multi-cultural and global economy. This segregation also means disparate environmental health and neighborhood conditions, differential access to business and job networks, differential access to quality schools, and exposure to differential levels of safety and surveillance.

Yet, the report asserts, the answer to resolving these disparities and improving the region is conscious and concerted local action. By looking at the ways that places, institutions and people impact outcomes, the region can examine the ways in which current practices and policies perpetuate racial disparities, or the ways that they can help advance racial equity.

The report was released in November 2016 by the Racial Equity Roundtable, with funding and support from the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo. The Racial Equity Roundtable continues to implement initiatives based on the report findings, and is continually seeking and recruiting additional partners in furthering racial equity in the region.

Report available at www.racialequitybuffalo.org.

Appendix A: Precedent Report Summaries

LMA17

Buffalo Niagara Labor Market Assessment 2017 (LMA17), examined workforce and industry trends in the Buffalo Niagara Metro Area (Erie and Niagara Counties) and Western New York (Buffalo Niagara Metro, plus Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Genesee, Orleans and Wyoming Counties). This report is an update of a 2009 study with a similar focus, but the 2017 version went further in depth, examining the workforce and workforce development capacity and upcoming trends.

Among the major trends identified in the reports: 1) while the unemployment rate has reduced significantly, the percentage of working age adults no longer in the workforce has increased, and the number of underemployed workers – those who have jobs that do not represent their level of education or skills – has expanded greatly and is now approximately 132,000 workers; 2) the number of workers who will be of retirement age in the next decade represents approximately 20% of the region's current jobs, representing 137,000 positions.

The large number of underemployed workers may be fueled in part by the large number of colleges and universities in the region, as the report suggests there are four associates degree graduates for every job available at that skill level, while there are three bachelors degree graduates for each job and fourteen master's degree earners for each job opening. Yet, there are many employers who report an inability to fill jobs openings requiring specialized skill sets. The report suggests there may be an education and training mismatch to the jobs that are available.

The underemployed are currently earning, on average, roughly \$22/hr (slightly higher than the roughly \$21/hour average regional wage). Though these individual earning numbers give no indication overall household income, official 2015 HHS guidelines set a \$24,250 poverty line for a family of four, meaning that the average underemployed worker is making (for a standard 2000

work-year) just under 200% of poverty annually. However, this number is still below the Median Household Income of \$50,962 for Buffalo Niagara (2015 ACS 5-year estimates).

The 33,000 unemployed workers in the region are predominantly middle-age males without college degrees, who are seeking employment in the range of \$18/hour. 41% of these workers report being unemployed because they were laid off, while another 22% report medical or disability issues have led to their unemployment.

Unemployed workers, however, do not account for people that are not currently looking for work. The report indicates there are 1.3 million individuals ages 16+ in the region and 58% of these individuals are in the labor force. It also reveals that labor force participation for the population 25-64 has fallen in all educational cohorts since 2009, but is correlated with educational attainment. Only 46% of people with less than a high school diploma, are in the work force, while 72% of those with high school diplomas or GEDs, 78% of those with some college or an associate's degree, and 87% of those with bachelor's degrees or higher are in the labor force.

Those not currently in the labor force, the cohort that is considering re-entering the job market (comprised predominantly of women and predominantly older), is seeking to earn roughly \$17/ hour. Approximately 40% of these potential workers report not working for a medical or disability reason, while about 30% are not working by personal choice.

Employ Buffalo Niagara, a collaborative, employer-led workforce development initiative, is being supported by the Buffalo Niagara Partnership with a goal of establishing industry specific talent management pipelines to address gaps in labor force availability in the region.

Report available at www.buffaloniagara.org/lma.

Appendix A: Precedent Report Summaries

Mobile Safety Net

The John R. Oishei Foundation's Mobile Safety Net project commissioned a major analysis on the challenges impacting low-income disconnected residents in a community-by-community examination. This research was designed to gather additional insights from residents, conduct focus groups, hear from organizations and develop a tool that will assist foundations and communities in strengthening services for marginalized populations. The in-depth analysis and recommendations in these reports — known as Strengthening WNY's Safety Net (2014) — are grounded in research conducted by the University at Buffalo Regional Institute and the Mobile Safety-Net Team and are intended to spur thought in the community about opportunities to create a stronger human services safety-net.

Separate Mobile Safety Net Community Profiles were conducted for the Buffalo east of Main Street, Buffalo west of Main Street, Cheektowaga, Concord and the Village Springville, Lackawanna, Lockport, Newstead, Newfane, Niagara Falls, the Cities of North Tonawanda and Tonawanda, the Town of Tonawanda, and West Seneca. The reports examined the people, places and services in each community. The research teams performed statistical and demographic analysis and spoke with residents and agencies about the state of the community leading to a series of recommendations on ways to address local needs and strengthen the safety net for vulnerable residents.

The indicators explored included the number of residents in poverty or struggling financially, the number of children in poverty, the percentage of residents reporting an urgent concern (such as housing instability or money for food), educational attainment and school proficiency, unemployment and housing/ jobs mismatch, vehicle ownership, and others to surface the greatest barriers to achievement and quality of life that residents face. The profiles also consider the state of communities themselves, from the housing stock to the availability of transportation options, and the presence of crime. These statistics are augmented with stories, insights of the challenges that individual residents have faced.

The Community Profiles are available at <http://regional-institute.buffalo.edu/project/strengthening-wnys-safety-net/>

United Way of Buffalo & Erie County's

Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS ON FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

Thank you for participating in this community conversation about the challenges and opportunities to improving the financial well-being of our community.

Your answers and opinions will help shape the work of the Empire State Poverty Reduction Task Force, convened by the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County.

Appendix B: Community Survey

Part 1: Please tell us a little about yourself

1. What is your gender?*

- Female Male
 Rather not say Other (specify): _____

2. What is your race / ethnicity? (Please check all that apply)*

- African American / Black Asian / Pacific Islander
 Hispanic / Latino/a Native American / Hawaiian
 White / Caucasian Rather not say
 Other (Please Specify) _____

3. What is the Zip Code where you currently live?* _____

4. What is your age?*

- under 18 18-24
 25-34 35-44
 45-54 55-64
 65-74 75 or older

5. What is your highest level of schooling completed?*

- Less than high school
 Some high school
 Completed high school / GED
 Some college / technical school
 Two-year degree (Associates)
 Four-year degree (Bachelors)
 Some graduate school
 Graduate degree or higher

Part 2: Challenges in your community

1. In your opinion, what is the most pressing challenge for people in your community?*

- Financial Hardship Housing
 Transportation Food Access & Availability
 Child Care Health & Wellness
 Jobs & Employment Education & Training
 Other (Please Specify): _____

2. What can be done to help lessen this challenge for people in your community?

Appendix B: Community Survey

PART 3: Jobs & Employment

1. Are you currently working? (Please check all that apply)*

- Full time
- Part time
- Unemployed (looking for a job)
- Retired
- Stay-at-home parent
- Student
- Self-employed / Business-owner
- Not currently able or available to work

2. If working, on average, how many hours per week do you work? _____

3. If working, on average, how long is your commute to work (one way)?

- Less than 10 minutes
- 10-20 minutes
- 20-30 minutes
- 30 - 45 minutes
- 45 minutes - 1 hour
- More than 1 hour
- Not working / work from home

3. If working, do you work at one job, or multiple jobs?

- 1
- 2
- 3 or more
- Not applicable/ not working

4. Are there other people in your household who are employed?

- Yes
- No

5. Do any of the following represent barriers to employment for you or people in your household? (Please check all that apply)*

- Not enough formal education
- Lack of training / credentials
- Not enough work experience
- Don't know where to find job opportunities
- Lack of jobs available
- Transportation challenges
- Incarceration / criminal record
- Child care issues
- Health problems / disability
- Lack of language skills
- No e-mail / internet / computer access
- Other (Please Specify) _____
- None

Appendix B: Community Survey

PART 4: Money & Finances

1. What sources of income do you receive? (Please check all that apply)*

- Salary / Wages from Work
- SSD
- Pension
- Child Support
- Other (Please Specify) _____
- SSI
- Short Term Disability
- Other Retirement
- TANF

2. What is your approximate annual household income?*

- \$0 - \$14,999
- \$25,000 - \$34,999
- \$50,000 - \$74,999
- \$15,000 - \$24,999
- \$35,000 - \$50,000
- \$75,000+

3. Do you face any barriers in building up financial savings? (Please check all that apply)

- Not enough money after paying for necessities
- Creditors / debt
- Would lose benefits / financial assistance
- Assisting family members or friends
- Do not have access to banking
- No, I don't face any barriers to saving
- Other (Please Specify) _____

4. In your opinion, what causes the poverty and disparities within our region?

5. In your opinion, what needs to change in order for people in your community to have financial stability?

Appendix B: Community Survey

PART 5: Housing

1. What is your current living arrangement?

- I own my home
- I rent a home or an apartment
- I share an apartment with someone else and pay rent
- I live with my family and do not pay rent
- I live with someone else (non-family) and do not pay rent
- I live in a dorm or other group setting
- I am currently homeless
- Other (Please Specify) _____

2. How many people live in your household? _____

3. Do you worry about being able to afford your rent or mortgage?

- All the time Sometimes
- I used to, but don't right now Never
- I don't have rent / mortgage to pay

4. Do you worry about being able to afford your gas, electric or water bills?

- All the time Sometimes
- I used to, but don't right now Never
- I don't have any gas, electric or water bills to pay

PART 6: Food Access & Availability

1. In the last year, have you or anyone in your household skipped meals because you could not afford food?

- Yes No
- Other (Please Specify) _____

2. Do you currently receive assistance paying for food (SNAP benefits)?

- Yes No
- Other (Please Specify) _____

3. Do you rely on other sources of assistance for food?

- Yes No

3 a. If so, what source(s):

Appendix B: Community Survey

PART 7: Transportation

1. What is your primary means of transportation?

- Bus or Metro Rail Walking
 Bicycle Personal car/ automobile
 Rides from friends/ family Car or ride sharing
 Taxicab Van service

Other (Please specify): _____

2. Do you have a motor vehicle available for personal use?

- Yes No
 Other (Please Specify) _____

3. Are jobs and other opportunities easily accessible from your neighborhood?

- Yes No
 Other (Please Specify) _____

4. Has a lack of transportation ever prevented you from (Please check all that apply):

- Getting a child in your care to school
 Attending a school meeting or event for a child in your care
 Visiting a doctor
 Applying for, accepting or maintaining a job
 Purchasing groceries or other daily needs
 Attending a community or religious event
 Visiting family or friends
 Renting or purchasing a home
 None of these
 Other (Please Specify) _____

PART 8: Childcare

1. Do you have children in your household?

- Yes No
 Other (Please Specify) _____

2. How many? _____

3. How old are they? (Please check all that apply)

- 0-4 5-12
 13-17 18-24
 25+

4. Do you currently pay for childcare?

- Yes No
 Other (Please Specify) _____

5. Do you currently receive a childcare subsidy?

- Yes No
 Other (Please Specify) _____

6. Have you ever turned down, quit or been fired from a job because of not having regular childcare or being unable to afford childcare?

- Yes No
 Other (Please Specify) _____

Appendix B: Community Survey

PART 9: Health & Wellness

1. Do you or a member of your household have a disability or chronic illness?

- Yes No

2. Have you ever lost a job or been unemployed because of a medical issue suffered by you or a loved one?

- Yes No

3. Have you avoided going to a doctor because you could not miss work?

- Yes, in the last 12 months
 In the past, but not recently
 No

4. Do you have health insurance? (Check all that apply)

- Yes, through my job Yes, through Medicare
 Yes, through Medicaid Yes, through the VA
 Yes, through my school
 Yes, through the New York State Health Exchange
 No, I don't have health insurance

5. Have you ever had trouble paying medical bills?

- Yes, currently
 In the past, but not currently
 No

6. Have you ever had trouble paying for medication?

- Yes, currently
 In the past, but not currently
 No

7. Have you ever avoided going to a doctor because of cost?

- Yes, in the last 12 months
 In the past, but not recently
 No

Appendix B: Community Survey

PART 10: Additional Thoughts

1. Is there a person or organization that has helped improve your opportunities or increase your quality of life? (Please check all that apply)

Yes, a person

If so, what relationship was this person to you (i.e., teacher, grandmother, pastor, etc.)?

Yes, an organization

If so, which organization(s)?

No

2. Do you have other solutions on how to eliminate barriers and increase opportunity for people in your community?

Yes

No

If so, please share them with us:

3. How did you hear about this survey? (Check all that apply)

Community forum

Juneteenth Festival

Mass Ave Park Community Concert

Approached by a survey taker

A friend / family member

By e-mail

On Facebook

On Twitter

Radio

Newspaper

From a government agency or an elected representative

From a non-profit or religious organization

Some other organization or company

Other (Please Specify): _____

3a. If you heard about this survey through an organization, which one?

AFL-CIO

Back to Basics Outreach Ministries

Buffalo Center for Arts & Technology (BCAT)

Buffalo Employment & Training Center (BETC)

Buffalo Public Schools

Buffalo Urban League

Catholic Charities of Buffalo

City of Buffalo Office of New Americans

Community Action Organization (CAO)

Hispanics United

NAACP

Say Yes Buffalo

The Service Collaborative of WNY

United Way

Other (Please Specify): _____

3b. If you heard about this survey through a government agency or representative, which one?

Appendix B: Community Survey

Thank you for participating in this survey!

If you would like to receive updates and information from United Way of Buffalo and Erie County's Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative, and to enter into a drawing for a gift of our appreciation, please fill out and detach this page.

Your personal information will not be linked to your survey responses.

First Name:* _____

Last Name:* _____

E-Mail: _____

Phone Number: _____

Facebook: _____

Twitter: _____

1. Please enter me in the drawing for appreciation gifts for completing the Community Conversation survey:

- Yes
- No

2. Please keep me informed about the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County's Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative:

- Yes
- No

BUFFALO EMPIRE STATE POVERTY REDUCTION INITIATIVE

Community Outreach and Engagement
Full Report
SUMMER 2017

ESPRI Steering Committee:

Michael Weiner, CEO, United Way of Buffalo and Erie County
Clotilde Perez-Dedecker, President & CEO, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo
Byron Brown, Mayor, City of Buffalo
Tim Kennedy, New York State Senator
Crystal People-Stokes, New York State Assembly Member
Mark Poloncarz, Erie County Executive

Convened By:



United Way
of Buffalo & Erie County

Co-Convened By:



Community Foundation
for Greater Buffalo

Funded By:



Prepared By:



September 2017, Buffalo, NY